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BISHOPS AND CLERGY OF OTHER DAYS.

BISHOPS AND CLERGY OF
OTHER DAYS.

OR,

THE LIVES OF TWO REFORMERS AND
THREE PURITANS.

BY THE

REV. J. C. RYLE, B.A.,

Vicar of Stradbroke, Suffolk.

AUTHOR OF "EXPOSITORY THOUGHTS," ETC.

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PREFACE.

THE volume now in the reader's hands requires a few prefatory words of explanation. It contains the lives of five eminent English ministers: Hooper, Latimer, Ward, Baxter, and Gurnall. Of these the two first were Bishops, leaders in the noble army of our Protestant Reformers, and martyrs at the stake in the reign of Queen Mary. The three last were famous Puritan divines, who lived and died in the seventeenth century.

Of course I have chosen these five men as subjects of biographies, deliberately, purposely, and with special reasons. What those reasons are I will proceed to explain.

(1) I hold, then, that the lives, deaths, and opinions of the leading English Reformers demand special investigation in the present day. The Church of England as it now is, was in great measure the work of their hands. To them, with a few trifling exceptions, we owe our

present Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies. That great Ecclesiastical machinery, whose centre is at Lambeth Palace, and whose influence is more or less felt throughout the world wherever the British flag waves, was purified, remoulded, and recast in its present form by their instrumentality. Can any one doubt that it is of the utmost importance to ascertain what they thought and did, and in defence of what opinions they lived and died?—Surely common sense points out that if we want to know who is a true “Churchman,” we should find out what manner of men the first Churchmen were. The natural way to ascertain what views of religion are “Church views,” is to inquire what kind of views were held by our Church Reformers in the sixteenth century. In matters of doctrine, are we of one mind with Cranmer, Ridley, Hooper, and Latimer? If not, we may be sure that our “Churchmanship” is of a very equivocal kind. It cannot be the true Churchmanship of the Reformed Church of England.

Holding these opinions, I have endeavoured to produce a correct sketch of two of the leading champions of the English Reformation. The two I have chosen,

undoubtedly, were in some respects not equal to Cranmer or Ridley. In popular talent, however, and general influence with their countrymen, they were probably second to none. I venture the conjecture that the middle classes and lower orders of Englishmen in the sixteenth century were more familiar with the names of Hooper and Latimer than of any of the Reformers. None, I suspect, left so deep a mark on the minds of their generation, none were so often talked of round English firesides, as the two whose lives are found in this volume. None, I am firmly persuaded, so thoroughly deserve to be had in honour. They were men of whom the Church of England may well be proud. She may reckon among her sons some perhaps who were their equals; but none, I am sure, who are their superiors. For abounding usefulness in life and noble courage in death, the two Bishops I have tried to photograph in this volume were never surpassed.

Certain modern Churchmen, I am well aware, have tried hard to depreciate the value of the English Reformation, and to vilify the character of the English Reformers. One writer in particular, who occupies no

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mean position among the champions of the Ritualistic or Catholic School, has not scrupled to put in print the following sentences:—

“Robespierre, Danton, Marat, St. Just, Couthon, and the like, merit quite as much admiration and respect as Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Hooper, and the others who happened to have the ill luck to be worsted in a struggle wherein they meant to serve their adversaries as they were served themselves.”—

“It has been brought as a serious charge against men of my school, that we should have been safe under Queen Mary. But we should have been burnt for refusing a new and immoral creed, if that young tiger-cub Edward VI. had lived, and Cranmer had not been arrested in his wicked career by Divine vengeance. Of the depth of infamy into which this wretched man descended as the unscrupulous tool of the tyrant Henry and his minion, Thomas Cromwell, I have no leisure to speak now.”—

“If history were honestly written, Latimer would change places with Bonner, and appear in true colours as the coarse, profane, unscrupulous, persecuting bully which the other prelate is usually called, and with the

special brand of cowardice besides, of which no man can accuse Bonner.”—

“Latimer was a coward.”—

“Latimer was perjured and unscrupulous.”—

“Latimer’s coarseness and profanity are not left to conjecture, nor to the bias of partisans. He has given ample proof of them under his own hand in his still extant sermons.”—

(See “Innovations:” a Lecture by Dr. Littledale, priest of the Church of England. Delivered at Liverpool, April 23, 1868. Pages 15, 16, 17, 44, 45.)

Violent language like this injures nobody but the man who uses it. It utterly defeats its own object. It proves far too much, if it proves anything at all. How any set of men so bad as Dr. Littledale paints the Reformers, could have obtained the influence they undoubtedly obtained, and swayed public opinion as they undoubtedly swayed it, is “a little difficulty” which this gentleman has not thought fit to explain. If our ancestors allowed the Reformation to be carried on by men of such wretched characters as Dr. Littledale attributes to the English Reformers, the Englishmen of

that day must have been idiots and fools. It is clear as daylight to my mind, even if there were no historical evidence on the subject, that the generation which really knew Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, and Hooper, thought far more highly of them than Dr. Littledale does. If they had been the bad, worthless men that he represents them, they would never have left such a deep mark on the religious character of England as they certainly did.

But after all, what proof does Dr. Littledale give that his low estimate of the English Reformers is correct? I answer unhesitatingly, None that will satisfy any impartial judge of evidence. The testimony of Fox, the Martyrologist, stands in the way, and how does he get over it? He simply abuses him, or in plain English calls him a liar. He says that he is a "a mendacious partisan." He styles the "Acts and Monuments of Fox" "a magazine of lying bigotry: a book which no educated man now living, possessed of any self-respect or honesty, does otherwise than repudiate with contempt and aversion." (See lecture on "Innovations," already quoted.)

Attacks such as these are very ancient things. From the day that the good old "Book of Martyrs" first

appeared, it has been assailed and abused more violently by the advocates of Popery than any uninspired book that ever was printed. Dr. Littledale is only walking in the steps of Harpsfield, Parsons, Laud, Heylin, the Roman Catholic, Dr. Milner, and others. The objections of these writers will be found fully examined in the preface to Canon Townshend's edition of Fox. That preface is a document which is far too little known. It deserves an attentive perusal.

My own opinion of Fox's great work differs widely from that of Dr. Littledale. That he never erred I do not pretend to say. He was no more infallible than the Pope. But that he is generally accurate in his statement of facts, and generally trustworthy in his estimate of character, I am thoroughly persuaded. In this opinion the following extracts from the prospectus of a new issue of Canon Townshend's edition of Fox's "Acts and Monuments" will prove that I do not stand alone:—

"The three Archbishops of Canterbury of Fox's own day bore the strongest testimony to his integrity. Archbishop Parker, in the Canons of 1571, ordered all bishops and other dignitaries to have in their hall or public

dining room, the Bible and Fox's great work. Archbishop Grindall was Fox's main assistant in the compilation; and Archbishop Whitgift speaks of Fox as 'that worthy man who hath deserved so well of the Church of England.'

"Leaving his own times, we come to Fuller, the Church historian, who says of Fox: 'His industry hath starved the endeavours of such as shall succeed him, leaving nothing for their pains to feed upon. 'For what can the man do that cometh after the king.'—Strype styles him 'A most painstaking searcher into records and archives; and one who, as he hath been found most diligent, so most strictly true and faithful.'—And Bishop Burnet adds, 'Having compared Fox's book with the records, I have never been able to discover any errors or prevarications in them, but the utmost fidelity and exactness.'

"Coming down to our own times, we find every competent judge agreeing, both as to the great value of Fox's collection, and as to its entire faithfulness. Foremost among these is Mr. Prebendary Soames, himself an historian of no mean rank, who says: 'The first portion of this important work, which is principally an historical

exposure of the Papacy, was originally printed in Latin on the Continent, whither the author had fled from the Marian prosecution. Having arrived at home soon after Elizabeth's accession, Fox was encouraged by various members of the hierarchy to crown his former labours, by adding to them copious accounts of those who had perished as religious delinquents under the late Queen. Every facility was afforded to him for the completion of this task in the most satisfactory manner; and he shows himself fully worthy of the confidence reposed in him. Invariable accuracy is not to be expected in any historical work of such extent; but it may be truly said of England's venerable Martyrologist, that his relations are more than ordinarily worthy of reliance. His principal object being, indeed, to leave behind him a mass of authentic information relating to those miserable times which it had been his lot to witness, he printed a vast mass of original letters, records of judicial processes, and other documentary evidence. The result of this judicious policy was a work which has highly gratified the friends of Protestantism, and successfully defied its enemies. Numerous attacks have been levelled at the honest

chronicles of Rome's intolerance, but they have ever 'fallen harmless from the assailant's hand.'

"The late Dr. Wordsworth (Master of Trinity College, Cambridge) says: 'I am not ignorant of what has been said by Milner, and by his predecessors, Harpsfield, Parsons, and others. But neither his writings nor theirs have proved, and it never will be proved, that John Fox is not one of the most faithful and authentic of all historians. We know too much of the strength of Fox's book, and of the weakness of those of his adversaries, to be further moved by Dr. John Milner's censures than to charge them with falsehood. All the many researches and discoveries of later times, in regard to historical documents, have only contributed to place the general fidelity and truth of Fox's narrative on a rock which cannot be shaken.'

"Dr. Jenkyns (the Editor of *Archbishop Cranmer's Remains*) says: 'I had occasion to compare several of the papers printed by Fox with the original documents, and I had good reason to be satisfied with the Martyrologist's fidelity and accuracy.'

"Mr. Froude, who has carefully gone over the whole

Tudor period, adds: 'I trust Fox when he produces documentary evidence, because I have invariably found his documents accurate.'

"Dr. Southey wrote: 'I have always intended to write the life of John Fox for the *Quarterly Review*, wherein I might render due honour to a man for whom I have a great veneration.'

"Archbishop Howley wrote: 'I am glad you intend to re-publish the great work of the Martyrology, and willingly consent to its being dedicated to myself.'"

After all, the "animus" of most modern attacks on the English Reformers is too transparently clear to be mistaken. The writers who make them dislike Protestantism most cordially, and want the Church of England to be Romanized once more. The writings and opinions of the Reformers stand sadly in their way! How can they possibly get over this barrier? They try to damage their character, and so to impair the value of their testimony. I predict they will not succeed. I believe that, like the viper biting the file, they are only labouring in vain and hurting themselves. I am not afraid of the result of any amount of examination that can

be applied to such men as Hooper and Latimer. Let men turn on them all the light they please, so long as it is fairly and honestly turned on. They will stand any properly conducted investigation. They will come out unscathed from the ordeal of any just inquiry. In a word, their names will live and be honoured when their assailants are clean forgotten.

(2) With regard to the Puritans, of whom I have brought forward three specimens in this volume, I believe that they deserve as much attention in the present day as the Reformers. I want to promote acquaintance with them in the minds of all students of English Church history. Never, I believe, were men so little understood and so absurdly maligned as the Puritans. On no subject perhaps are English Churchmen so much in the dark, and require such thorough enlightening. If the biographies of Ward, Baxter, and Gurnall only help to make my readers understand what "a Puritan" really was, I shall feel I have done the cause of truth some service.

The common impression of most English Churchmen about the Puritans is, that they were ignorant fanatical dissenters, who troubled England in the seventeenth cen-

ture,—that they hated the Monarchical form of government and cut off Charles the First's head,—that they hated the Church of England and caused its destruction,—and that they were unlearned enthusiasts who despised knowledge and study, and regarded all forms of worship as Popery. There are living Ecclesiastical orators of high rank and brilliant reputation, who are never weary of flinging the epithet “Puritanical” at Evangelical Churchmen, as the hardest word of scorn that they can employ. Let no Churchman's heart fail when he hears himself stigmatized as “a Puritan.” The man who tells the world that there is any disgrace in being “a Puritan” is only exposing his own ignorance of plain facts, or shamefully presuming on that wide-spread ignorance of English Church history which marks the nineteenth century. The Puritans were not faultless, I freely admit. They said, did, and wrote many things which cannot be commended. Some of them, no doubt, were violent, fierce, narrow-minded sectarians. Yet even then great allowance ought to be made for the trying circumstances in which they were placed, and the incessant irritating persecution to which they were exposed. With all their

faults the leaders of the party were great and good men. With all their defects, the Puritans, as a body, were not the men that High Church writers and orators in the present day are fond of representing them to have been.

The Puritans were not enemies to the Monarchy. It is simply false to say that they were. The great majority of them protested strongly against the execution of Charles I., and were active agents in bringing back Charles II. to England, and placing the crown on his head after Oliver Cromwell's death. The base ingratitude with which they were afterwards treated in 1662, by the very Monarch whom they helped to restore, is one of the most shameful pages in the history of the Stuarts.

The Puritans were not enemies to the Church of England. They would gladly have seen her government and ceremonial improved, and more liberty allowed to her ministers in the conduct of public worship. And they were quite right! But the bulk of them were originally ordained by Bishops, and had no special objection either to Episcopacy or a Liturgy. Baxter, one of their leaders, expressly testifies, that a very few con-

cessions in 1662 would have retained in the Church of England *sixteen hundred* out of the two thousand who were driven out by the Act of Uniformity on Bartholomew's Day.

The Puritans were not unlearned and ignorant men. The great majority of them were Oxford and Cambridge graduates, many of them Fellows of Colleges, some of them Heads and Principals of the best Houses in the two Universities. In knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, in power as preachers, expositors, writers, and critics, the Puritans in their day were second to none. Their works still speak for them on the shelves of every well-furnished theological library. Those who hold them up to scorn in the present day as shallow illiterate men, are only exhibiting their own lamentable shallowness, their own ignorance of historical facts, and the extremely superficial character of their own reading.

The Puritans, as a body, have done more to elevate the national character than any class of Englishmen that ever lived. Mighty at the council board, and no less mighty in the battle field,—feared abroad throughout Europe, and invincible at home while united,—great

with their pens, and great with their swords,—they were a generation of men who have never received from their countrymen the honour that they deserve. The body of which Milton, Selden, Blake, Cromwell, Owen, Manton, Baxter, and Charnock were members, is a body of which no well-informed Englishman should ever speak with disrespect. Lord Macaulay, no mean authority in matters of history, might well say, in his essay on Milton, “We do not hesitate to pronounce the Puritans a brave, a wise, an honest, and a useful body.” Unhappily, when they passed away, they were followed by a generation of profligates, triflers, and sceptics, and their reputations have suffered accordingly, in passing through prejudiced hands. But judged with “righteous judgment,” they will be found men “of whom the world was not worthy.” The more they are really known, the more they will be esteemed.

Does any reader wonder that such men as the Puritans should be so bitterly hated in the present day? Does any one ask how it is that certain Ecclesiastical pulpit orators and platform-speakers never lose an opportunity of having a fling at them, and mentioning them with

scorn? I will answer these questions without hesitation. *They are hated because they were thoroughly Protestant and thoroughly Evangelical!* Against Popery in every shape and form they were always protesting. Against sacramental justification, formalism, ceremonialism, baptismal regeneration, mystical views of the Lord's Supper, they were always lifting up a warning voice. No wonder that Ritualists, Tractarians, Romanizers, and their companions, loathe the very name of the Puritans, and labour in every way to damage their authority. You might as well expect Gardiner to praise the works of Cranmer, Harding to recommend the study of Jewell, and Cardinal Bellarmine to urge the perusal of Whittaker, as expect Ritualists and High Churchmen to speak well of the Puritans! So long as English Churchmen dislike Protestant and Evangelical opinions, so long they are sure to dislike the Puritans.

For myself I can only say, that the very reason why many in this day dislike the Puritans, is the very reason why I love them and delight to do honour to their names. I love their bold and outspoken *Protestantism*. I love their clear, sharply cut, distinct *Evangelicalism*.

I want to see their writings more widely read, and their conduct more duly appreciated by English Churchmen. If a perusal of the three biographies I have compiled helps to make them better known and better understood, I shall feel that this volume has not been issued in vain.

I now send forth the volume with an earnest prayer that God may be pleased to use it for His own glory, and for the good of souls.

J. C. RYLE.

Stradbroke Vicarage,
October, 1868.

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BISHOP HOOPER.

CHAPTER I.

HOOPER'S TIMES.

VALUE OF HISTORICAL LIGHT—SEASONABLENESS OF A REFORMER'S
LIFE IN THE PRESENT DAY—CHARACTERISTICS OF ENGLISH
RELIGION BEFORE THE REFORMATION—DENSE IGNORANCE—
DEGRADING SUPERSTITION—WIDE-SPREAD IMMORALITY—COVE-
TOUSNESS AND IMPURITY OF CLERGY—A GREAT DEBT OWING
TO THE REFORMATION.

IN a day of religious controversy, no one is so useful to his generation as the man who contributes a little "light." Amidst the din and strife of ecclesiastical warfare, amidst the fog and dust stirred up by excited disputants, amidst assertions and counter-assertions, a thinking man will often cry with the dying philosopher,—“I want more light: give me more light.” He that can make two ears of corn grow where one grew before, has been rightly called a benefactor to mankind. He that can throw a few rays of fresh light on the theological questions of the day, is surely doing a service to the Church and the world.

Thoughts such as these came across my mind when I chose the subject of this biographical paper: “John

Hooper, the martyred Bishop, of Gloucester : his times, life, death, and opinions." I chose it with a meaning. I have long felt that the lives and opinions of the English Reformers deserve attentive study in the present day. I thought that a picture of John Hooper would throw useful light on points of deep interest in our times.

We live in days when the Romish Church is making gigantic efforts to regain her lost power in England, and thousands of English people are helping her. None are doing the work of Rome so thoroughly as those English Churchmen, who are called Ritualists. Consciously or unconsciously, they are paving the way for her advance, and laying down the rails for her trains. They are familiarizing the mind of thousands with Romish ceremonial,—its millinery, its processions, its gestures, its postures, its theatrical, sensuous, style of worship. They are boldly preaching and publishing downright Romish doctrine,—the real presence, the priestly character of the ministry, the necessity of auricular confession and sacerdotal absolution. They are loudly proclaiming their desire for re-union with the Church of Rome. In short the battle of the Reformation must be fought over again. Ritualism is nothing but Romanism in the bud, and Romanism is Ritualism in flower. The triumph of Ritualism will be the triumph of Romanism and the restoration of Popery. Now before we go back to

Rome, let us thoroughly understand what English Romanism was. Let us bring in the light. Let us not take a "leap in the dark."

We live in times when many Churchmen openly sneer at our Reformation, and scoff at our Reformers. The martyrs, whose blood was the seed of our Church, are abused and vilified, and declared to be no martyrs at all. Cranmer is called "a cowardly traitor," and Latimer "a coarse, illiterate bully." The Reformation is said to have been "an unmitigated disaster," and a "change taken in hand by a conspiracy of adulterers, murderers, and thieves." (See *Church Times*, of March 14, 1867.) Let us study one of our leading Reformers to-day, and see what the man was like. Let us pass under review one who was a friend and cotemporary of Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer, and a leading fellow-labourer in the work of the Reformation. Let us find out how he lived, and how he preached, and what he thought, and how he died, before we believe the writers of ritualistic newspapers, and throw him aside. Once more I say, let us bring in the light.

We live in times when the strangest misrepresentations prevail about the true character of the Church of England. Scores of clergymen all over the country are not ashamed to denounce the very name of Protestantism, and to tell people that "Evangelical" Churchmen are not Churchmen at all! Forsooth,

we are Calvinists, Puritans, Dissenters, Methodists, Fanatics, and the like, and ought to leave the Church of England and go to our own place! Let us bring these gentlemen to the test of a few plain facts. Let us examine the recorded sentiments, the written opinions of one of the very divines to whom we owe our Articles and Prayer-book, with very few alterations. Let us hear what Bishop Hooper wrote, and thought, and taught. Let us not hastily concede that Ritualists and High Churchmen are the true representatives of the Church of England. "He that is first in his own cause seemeth just, but his neighbour that cometh after searcheth him." (Pro. xviii. 17.) Once more, I say, let us turn on the light.

I will begin by giving some account of *Bishop Hooper's times*.—What kind of times were they in a religious point of view? Out of the pages of Fox, Strype, Burnet, Soames, and Blunt, let me try to supply a few historical gleanings.

John Hooper was born in 1495 and died in 1555. He first saw the light in the reign of Henry the Seventh, and was burned in the reign of Queen Mary. He lived through the whole reigns of Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth, and was an eyewitness of all that took place under the government of those two kings. The sixty years of his life take in one of the most eventful periods of English history. It would be impossible to exaggerate the difference there was be-

tween England in 1495 and the same England in 1555. In a religious and moral view the whole country was turned upside down. When Hooper was born, the English Reformation had not begun, and the Church of Rome ruled England undisturbed. When he died, the Reformation had struck such deep root, that neither argument nor persecution could overthrow it.

What were the leading characteristics of English religion before the Reformation? In what state did the mighty change which Hooper witnessed and helped forward, find our forefathers? In one word, what does England owe to that subversion of Popery and that introduction of Protestantism, in which Hooper was a leading instrument? Let me try to supply a short answer to these questions. They are subjects, I am sorry to say, on which most people seem to know nothing at all. The minds of the vast majority of my countrymen appear to be a total blank about the history of three hundred years ago. With all the stir made about education, the ignorance of our own country's history is something lamentable and appalling and depressing. I never can believe that Ritualism would have obtained so many adherents, if English people only knew the extent of our debt to the Protestant Reformation. They would never trifle, and tamper, and dabble with Popery, if they only knew what Popery was.

(a) Before the Reformation one leading feature of

English religion was *dense ignorance*. There was among all classes a conspicuous absence of all knowledge of true Christianity. A gross darkness overspread the land, a darkness that might be felt. Not one in a hundred could have told you as much about the Gospel of Christ, as we could now learn from any intelligent Sunday-school child.

We need not wonder at this ignorance. The people had neither schools nor Bibles. Wickliffe's New Testament, the only translation extant till Henry the Eighth's Bible was printed, cost £2 16s. 3d. of our money. The prayers of the Church were in Latin, and of course the people could not understand them. Preaching there was scarcely any. Quarterly sermons were indeed prescribed to the clergy, but not insisted on. Latimer says that while mass was never to be left unsaid for a single Sunday, sermons might be omitted for twenty Sundays, and nobody was blamed. After all, when there were sermons, they were utterly unprofitable: and latterly to be a preacher was to be suspected of being a heretic.

To cap all, the return that Hooper got from the diocese of Gloucester, when he was first appointed Bishop in 1551, will give a pretty clear idea of the ignorance of Pre-Reformation times. Out of 311 clergy of his diocese, 168 were unable to repeat the ten commandments; 31 of the 168 could not state in what part of Scripture they were to be found; 40 could not tell

where the Lord's prayer was written ; and 31 of the 40 were ignorant who was the author of the Lord's prayer !

If this is not ignorance, I know not what is. If such were the pastors what must the people have been ! If this was the degree of knowledge among the parsons, what must it have been among the people !

(b) But this is not all. Before the Reformation, another leading feature of English religion was *superstition of the lowest and most degrading description*. Of the extent to which this was carried few, I suspect, have the smallest idea.

Men and women in those days had uneasy consciences sometimes, and wanted relief. They had sorrow and sickness and death to pass through, just like ourselves. What could they do ? Whither could they turn ? There was none to tell them of the love of God and mediation of Christ, of the glad tidings of free, full, and complete salvation, of justification by faith, of grace, and faith, and hope, and repentance. They could only turn to the priests, who knew nothing themselves and could tell nothing to others. "The blind led the blind, and both fell into the ditch." In a word, the religion of our ancestors, before Hooper's time, was little better than an organized system of Virgin Mary worship, saint worship, image worship, relic worship, pilgrimages, almsgivings, formalism, ceremonialism,¹ processions, prostrations, bowings, crossings, fastings, confessions, absolutions, masses,

penances, and blind obedience to the priests. It was a grand higgledy-piggledy of ignorance and idolatry, and serving an unknown God by deputy. The only practical result was that the priests took the people's money, and undertook to ensure their salvation, and the people flattered themselves that the more they gave to the priests, the more sure they were of going to heaven.

The catalogue of gross and ridiculous impostures which the priests practised on the people would fill a volume, and I cannot of course do more than supply a few specimens.

At the Abbey of Hales, in Gloucestershire, a vial was shown by the priests to those who offered alms, which was said to contain the blood of Christ. On examination, in King Henry the Eighth's time, this notable vial was found to contain neither more nor less than the blood of a duck, which was renewed every week.

At Bexley, in Kent, a crucifix was exhibited, which received peculiar honour and large offerings, because of a continual miracle which was said to attend its exhibition. When people offered copper, the face of the figure looked grave; when they offered silver, it relaxed its severity; when they offered gold, it openly smiled. In Henry the Eighth's time this famous crucifix was examined, and wires were found within it by which the priests could pull the face of the image, and make it assume any expression that they pleased.

At Reading Abbey, in Berkshire, the following relics, among many others, were most religiously worshipped,—an angel with one wing,—the spear-head that pierced our Saviour's side,—two pieces of the Holy cross,—St. James' hand, St. Philip's stole, and a bone of Mary Magdalene.

At Bury St. Edmund's, in Suffolk, the priests exhibited the coals that roasted St. Lawrence, the parings of St. Edmund's toe-nails, Thomas a Becket's penknife and boots, and as many pieces of our Saviour's cross as would have made, if joined together, one large whole cross

At Maiden Bradley Priory, in Somersetshire, the worshippers were privileged to see the Virgin Mary's smock, part of the bread used at the original Lord's supper, and a piece of the stone manger in which our Lord was laid at Bethlehem.

At Bruton Priory, in Somersetshire, was kept a girdle of the Virgin Mary, made of red silk. This solemn relic was sent as a special favour to women in childbirth, to insure them a safe delivery. The like was done with a white girdle of Mary Magdalene, kept at Farley Abbey, in Wiltshire. In neither case, we may be sure, was the relic sent without a pecuniary consideration.^a

^a Strype and Burnet are my authority for the above mentioned facts.

Records like these are so silly and melancholy that one hardly knows whether to laugh or to cry. But it is positively necessary to bring them forward, in order that men may know what was the religion of our forefathers before the Reformation. Wonderful as these things may sound in our ears, we must never forget that Englishmen at that time knew no better. A famishing man, in sieges and blockades, has been known to eat mice and rats rather than die of hunger. A soul famishing for lack of God's Word must not be judged too harshly if it struggles to find comfort in the most grovelling superstition.

(c) One thing more yet remains behind. Before the Reformation, another leading feature of English religion was *wide-spread unholiness and immorality*. The lives of the clergy, as a general rule, were simply scandalous, and the moral tone of the laity was naturally at the lowest ebb. Of course grapes will never grow on thorns, nor figs on thistles. To expect the huge roots of ignorance and superstition, which filled our land, to bear any but corrupt fruit, would be unreasonable and absurd. But a more thoroughly corrupt set than the English clergy were, in the palmy days of undisturbed Romanism, it would be impossible to imagine.

I might tell you of the habits of gluttony, drunkenness, and gambling, for which the parochial priesthood became unhappily notorious.

“Too often,” says Blunt, “they were persons taken from the lowest of the people, with all the gross habits of the class from which they sprang,—loiterers on the ale-house bench,—dicers, scarce able to read by rote their paternoster, often unable to repeat the Ten Commandments,—mass-priests, who could just read their breviaries, and no more,—men often dubbed by the uncomplimentary names of Sir John Lack-Latin, Sir John Mumble-Matins, or babbling and blind Sir John.” In fact, the carnal living, fat bellies, and general secularity of ministers of religion, were proverbial before the Reformation.

I might tell you of the shameless covetousness which marked the Pre-Reformation priesthood. So long as a man gave liberal offerings at the shrine of such saints as Thomas a Becket, the clergy would absolve him of almost any sin. So long as a felon or malefactor paid the monks well, he might claim sanctuary within the precincts of religious houses, after any crime, and hardly any law could reach him. Yet all this time for Lollards and Wickliffites there was no mercy at all! The very carvings still extant in some old ecclesiastical buildings tell a story in stone and wood, which speaks volumes to this day. Friars were often represented as foxes preaching, with the neck of a stolen goose peeping out of the hood behind,—as wolves giving absolution, with a sheep muffled up in their cloaks,—as apes sitting by a sick man’s bed,

with a crucifix in one hand, and with the other in the sufferer's pocket. Things must indeed have been at a low ebb, when the faults of ordained ministers were so publicly held up to scorn.

But the blackest spot on the character of our Pre-Reformation clergy in England is one of which it is painful to speak. I mean the impurity of their lives, and their horrible contempt of the seventh commandment. The results of auricular confession, carried on by men bound by their vow never to marry, were such that I dare not enter into them. The consequences of shutting up herds of men and women, in the prime of life, in monasteries and nunneries, were such that I will not defile my readers' minds by dwelling upon them. Suffice it to say that the discoveries made by Henry the Eighth's Commissioners, of the goings on in many of the so-called religious houses, were such as it is impossible to describe. Anything less "holy" than the practice of many of the "holy" men and women of these professedly "holy" retreats from sin and the world, the imagination cannot conceive. If ever there was a plausible theory weighed in the balance and found utterly wanting, it is the favourite theory that celibacy and monasticism promote holiness. Romantic young men and sentimental young ladies may mourn over the ruins of such Abbeys as Battle, and Glastonbury, and Bolton, and Kirkstall, and Furness, and Croyland, and Bury, and Tintern. But I venture

boldly to say that too many of these houses were sinks of iniquity, and that too often monks and nuns were the scandal of Christianity.

I grant freely that all monasteries and nunneries were not equally bad. I admit that there were religious houses like Godstow Nunnery, near Oxford, which had a stainless reputation. But I fear that these were bright exceptions which only proved the truth of the rule. The preamble of the Act for Dissolution of Religious Houses, founded on the report of Henry the Eighth's Commissioners, contains broad, general statements, that cannot be got over. It declares "that manifest sin, vicious, carnal, and abominable living is daily used and committed in abbeys, priories, and other religious houses of monks, canons, and nuns, and that albeit many continual visitations have been had, by the space of two hundred years and more, for an honest and charitable reformation of such unthrifty, carnal, and abominable living, yet that nevertheless little or none amendment was hitherto had, but that their vicious living shamefully increased and augmented."

After all there is no surer receipt for promoting immorality than "fulness of bread and abundance of idleness." (Ezek. xvi. 49.) Take any number of men and women, of any nation, rank, or class,—bind them by a vow of celibacy,—shut them in houses by themselves,—give them plenty to eat and drink, and give

them nothing to do,—and above all give them no Bible reading, no true religion, no preaching of the Gospel, no inspection, and no check from public opinion;—if the result of all this be not abominable and abundant breach of the seventh commandment, I can only say that I have read human nature in vain.

I make no apology for dwelling on these things. Painful and humbling as the picture is, it is one that in these times ought to be carefully looked at, and not thrown aside. Before we join in the vulgar outcry which some modern Churchmen are making against the Reformation, I want English people to understand from what the Reformation delivered us. Before we make up our minds to give up Protestantism and receive back Popery and monasticism, let us thoroughly understand what was the state of England when Popery had its own way. My own belief is that never was a change so loudly demanded as the Reformation, and that never did men do such good service to England, as Hooper and his fellow labourers, the Reformers. In short, unless a man can disprove the plain historical facts recorded in the pages of Strype, Burnet, Soames, and Blunt, he must either admit that the Pre-Reformation times were bad times, or be content to be regarded as a lunatic. To no class of men does England owe such a debt as to our Protestant Reformers, and it is a burning shame if we are ungrateful and refuse to pay that debt.

Of course it is easy and cheap work to pick holes in the character of some of the agents whom God was pleased to use at the Reformation. No doubt Henry the Eighth,—who had the Bible translated, and made Cranmer and Latimer bishops, and suppressed the monasteries,—was a brutal and bad man. I am not concerned to defend him. But God has often done good work with very bad tools; and the grand result is all we have to look at. And, after all, bad as Henry the Eighth was, the less our Romanizing friends dwell on that point the better. His character at any rate will bear a favourable comparison with that of many of the Popes. At any rate he was a married man.

It is easy, on the other hand, to say that Hooper and his brother Reformers did their work badly, countenanced many abuses, left many things imperfect and incomplete. All this may be very true. But in common fairness men should remember the numerous difficulties they had to contend with, and the mountain of rubbish they had to shovel away. To my mind the wonder is not so much that they did so little, but rather that they succeeded in doing anything at all.

After all, when all has been said, and every objection raised, there remain some great plain facts which cannot well be got over. Let men say what they will, or pick holes where they may, they will never succeed in disproving these facts. To the Reformation English-

men owe an English Bible, and liberty for every man to read it.—To the Reformation they owe the knowledge of the way of peace with God, and of the right of every sinner to go straight to Christ by faith, without bishop, priest, or minister standing in his way.—To the Reformation they owe a Scriptural standard of morality and holiness, such as our ancestors never dreamed of. For ever let us be thankful for these inestimable mercies! For ever let us grasp them firmly, and refuse to let them go! For my part, I hold that he who would rob us of these privileges, and draw us back to Pre-Reformation ignorance, superstition and unholiness, is an enemy to his country, and ought to be firmly opposed.

CHAPTER II.

HOOPER'S LIFE.

BORN IN SOMERSETSHIRE IN 1495—EDUCATED AT MERTON COLLEGE, OXFORD—A MONK AT OLD CLEVE AND GLOUCESTER—WITHDRAWS, AND RESIDES AT OXFORD—MEANS OF HIS CONVERSION TO PROTESTANTISM—OBLIGED TO FLEE TO THE CONTINENT IN 1539—LIVES AT STRASBURGH, BALE, AND ZURICH—RETURNS TO ENGLAND IN 1549, IN EDWARD SIXTH'S REIGN—NOMINATED TO BISHOPRIC OF GLOUCESTER IN 1550—CONTROVERSY ABOUT VESTMENTS WITH CRANMER AND RIDLEY—CONSECRATED IN 1551—CHARACTER OF HIS EPISCOPAL LABOURS.

I TURN from Hooper's times to *Hooper Himself*. For dwelling so long on his times I think it needless to make any apology. You cannot rightly estimate a public man, unless you know the times in which he lived. You cannot duly appreciate an English Reformer, unless you understand the state of England before the Reformation. We have seen the state of things that Hooper and his companions had to deal with. Now let us find out something about Hooper himself.

John Hooper was born in the county of Somerset, in the year 1495, in the reign of Henry the Seventh. The parish in which he was born is not known, and not even a tradition has survived about it. In this respect Hooper and Rowland Taylor stand alone among

the English martyrs. The birthplaces of Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Rogers, Bradford, Philpot, and Ferrar, have all been ascertained. The position which his family occupied in the county is alike unknown. There is, however, good reason for believing that his father was not a mere yeoman, but a man of considerable wealth.

The early history of this great Reformer is wrapped in much obscurity. He entered Merton College, Oxford, in 1514, at the age of nineteen, under the tuition of an uncle, who was then Fellow of that College. He took his degree as B.A. in 1518, at the age of twenty-three, and never afterwards proceeded to a higher degree. These are literally the only facts that have been discovered about the first twenty-three years of Hooper's life. From 1518 to 1539,—a period of no less than twenty-one years,—we are again left almost entirely in the dark about Hooper's history. There can be little doubt, however, that it was a most momentous crisis in his life, and gave a colour and bias to the whole man for the rest of his days. Tradition says, that after taking his degree at Oxford, he became a monk—first at the Cistercian Monastery of Old Cleve, near Watchet, in Somersetshire, and afterwards in another Cistercian house at Gloucester. Tradition adds, that he became wearied and disgusted with a monastic life, and withdrew from it to reside at Oxford; though at what precise date is not known.

It is some corroboration of these traditions, that when he was sentenced to death afterwards by Gardiner, he was described as "formerly a monk of the Monastery of Cleve, of the Cistercian order." Yet it must be admitted that there is a conspicuous absence in his literary remains of any reference to his experience as a monk.

One thing, at any rate, is very certain about Hooper at this stage of his life. It was during these twenty-one years, between 1518 and 1539, that his eyes were opened to the false doctrines and unscriptural practices of Popery, though when and where we cannot exactly tell. He says himself, in a letter to Bullinger, the Swiss Reformer, that "when he was a courtier, and living too much of a court life in the palace of the King," he met with certain writings of Zwingli, and certain commentaries of Bullinger on St. Paul's Epistles, and that to the study of these books he owed his deliverance from Papacy, and the conversion of his soul. This deeply interesting letter will be found in the "Original Letters from Zurich," published by the Parker Society. To the meaning, however, of the allusion to "a court life," and "the palace of the King," the letter, unfortunately, supplies no clue.

Another fact about Hooper at this period of his history is no less certain. He was obliged to leave Oxford in 1539, when the semi-Popish statute of the Six Articles, which made Latimer resign his Bishopric,

was put in operation. Fox, the Martyrologist, distinctly asserts that his known attachment to the principles of the Reformation attracted the notice of the Oxford authorities, and specially of Dr. Smith, the Professor of Divinity. The consequence was, that he was compelled to retire from the University, and appears to have never resided there again.

On leaving Oxford, in 1539, Hooper became, for a short time, Steward and Chaplain in the household of Sir Thomas Arundel. Here also again his Protestant principles got him into trouble. His master liked him, but did not like his opinions. The consequence was, that he sent him to Bishop Gardiner with a private letter, in which he requested him to "do his Chaplain some good." Gardiner, however, after four or five days' conference, could make nothing of the sturdy Reformer, and utterly failed to shake his opinions. The end of the matter was (says Fox), "that he sent Sir Thomas his servant again, right well commending his learning and wit, but bearing in his heart a grudge against Master Hooper." This grudge, unhappily, was not forgotten, and bore bitter fruit after many days.

The connection between Hooper and Sir Thomas Arundel did not last long after this. The Protestant Chaplain found that his life was not safe in England, and, like many of the good men of his day, withdrew to the Continent. There he appears to

have lived for at least nine years, first at Strasburgh, afterwards at Bâle, and finally at Zurich. It was at this period of his life, no doubt, that he became established in those clear, distinct views of doctrinal truth, which he afterwards so nobly maintained in his own country. At this period, too, he formed friendships with Bullinger, Bucer, A. Lasco, and other Continental Reformers, who ever afterwards regarded him with deep affection. At this period, too, about the year 1546, he married a noble Burgundian lady, named Anna de Tzerclas, who seems to have been in every way a help-meet for him.

In 1547 Henry the Eighth died, and Edward the Sixth commenced his short but glorious reign. Soon after this Hooper began to feel it his bounden duty to give his aid to the work of the Protestant Reformation in his own country, and after taking an affectionate leave of his Zurich friends, set out on his return to England. His parting words were painfully prophetic and deeply touching. They told him they fully expected that he would rise to a high position in his native land; they hoped he would not forget his old friends; they begged him to write to them sometimes. In reply, Hooper assured them that he should never forget their many kindnesses; promised to write to them from time to time; and concluded with the following memorable words: "The last news of all, Master Bullinger, I shall not be able to write. For

there, where I shall take most pains, there shall ye hear of me to be burnt to ashes. That shall be the last news, which I shall not be able to write to you. But you shall hear it of me."

Hooper arrived in London in May, 1549, and was gladly received by the friends of the Reformation, which, in the face of immense difficulties, Cranmer and Ridley were slowly pressing forward. He came like a welcome reinforcement in the midst of an arduous campaign, and mightily strengthened the cause of Protestantism. His reputation, as a man of soundness, learning, and power, had evidently gone before him. He was very soon appointed Chaplain to the Protector, the Duke of Somerset. With characteristic zeal he devoted himself at once to the work of teaching, and generally preached twice a day, and this with such marked acceptance that the churches could not contain the crowds that flocked to hear him. Even Dr. Smith, his enemy, confessed that "he was so much admired by the people that they held him for a prophet: nay, they looked upon him as a deity."

Fox, the Martyrologist, who evidently knew Hooper well, bears the following testimony to his high character at this time, both for gifts and graces.—"In his doctrine he was earnest, in tongue eloquent, in the Scriptures perfect, in pains indefatigable. His life was so pure and good that no breath of slander could fasten any fault upon him. He was of body strong, his health

whole and sound, his wit very pregnant, his invincible patience able to sustain whatsoever sinister fortune and adversity could do. He was constant of judgment, spare of diet, sparer of words, and sparest of time. In housekeeping he was very liberal, and sometimes more free than his living would extend unto. Briefly, of all those virtues and qualities required of St. Paul in a good Bishop, in his Epistle to Timothy, I know not one that was lacking in Master Hooper."

A man of this mould and stamp was rightly esteemed the very man to make a Bishop in Edward the Sixth's days. Within a year of his landing in England the prophecies of his Zurich friends were fulfilled. After preaching a course of Lent Sermons before the King, in 1550, John Hooper, the friend of Bullinger, the exile of Zurich, the most popular preacher of the day, was nominated to fill the vacant Bishopric of Gloucester. A wiser choice could not have been made. Rarely, too rarely, in the annals of the Church of England has there been such an instance of the right man being put in the right place.

Hooper's nomination, however, brought him into a most unhappy collision with Cranmer and Ridley, on a very awkward subject. He steadily refused to take the oath which had been taken hitherto by Bishops at their consecration, and to wear the episcopal vestments which had hitherto been worn. The oath he objected

to as flatly unscriptural, because it referred to the saints as well as God. The vestments he objected to as remnants of Popery, which ought to be clean put away.

A controversy arose at once between Hooper and his two great fellow-labourers, which delayed his consecration almost a whole year, and did immense harm. The more trifling and unimportant the original cause of dispute appeared to be, the more heated and obstinate the disputants became. In vain did Ridley confer and correspond with his recusant brother. In vain did Edward the Sixth and his Privy Council write to Cranmer, and offer to discharge him from all risk of penalties, if he would "let pass certain rites and ceremonies" offensive to the Bishop designate. In vain did foreign Reformers write long letters, and entreat both parties to concede something and give way. The contention grew so sharp that the Privy Council became weary of Hooper's obstinacy, and actually committed him to the Fleet Prison! At length a compromise was effected. Hooper gave way on some points, for peace sake. He consented to wear the obnoxious vestments on certain public occasions,—at his consecration, before the King, and in his own Cathedral. The objectionable words in the Episcopal Oath were struck out by the King's own hand. The prison gates were then thrown open, and to the great joy of all true Protestants, Hooper

was consecrated Bishop of Gloucester on the 8th of March, 1551.

This miserable controversy between Hooper and his two great opponents, like all the disputes of good men, is a sorrowful subject. Of course it need not surprise us. The best of men are only men at their best. If Paul and Barnabas quarrelled until they parted company, and Peter and Paul came into open collision at Antioch, we must not judge our English Reformers too harshly, if they did not always agree. But it is vain to deny that this famous quarrel did great harm at the time, and sowed seeds which are bearing mischievous fruit down to this very day.

At the distance of three hundred years, I freely admit, we are poor judges of the whole case. Both parties undoubtedly were more or less in the wrong, and the only question is as to the side which was most to blame. The general verdict of mankind, I am quite aware, has been against Hooper. To this verdict, however, I must honestly say, I cannot subscribe. It is my deliberate conviction, after carefully weighing the whole affair, that Hooper was most in the right, and Cranmer and Ridley were most in the wrong.

I believe the plain truth to be, that Hooper was much more far-sighted than his excellent fellow-labourers. He looked further ahead than they did, and saw the possibility of evils arising in the Church

of England, of which they in their charity never dreamed. He foresaw, with prophetic eye, the immense peril of having nest-eggs for future Romanism within our pale. He foresaw a time when the Pope's friends would take advantage of the least crevice left in the walls of our Zion; and he would fain have had every crack stopped up. He would not have left a single peg on which Romanizing Churchmen could have rehung the abominable doctrine of the mass. It is my decided opinion that he was quite right. Events have supplied abundant proof that his conscientious scruples were well-founded. I believe, if Cranmer and Ridley had calmly listened to his objections, and seized the opportunity of settling the whole question of "vestments" in a thoroughly Protestant way, it would have been a blessing to the Church of England! In a word, if Hooper's views had been allowed to prevail, one half of the Ritualistic controversy would never have existed at all.^a

^a It is a pleasing fact, that at a later date there seems to have been a complete reconciliation between Hooper and Ridley, if indeed there ever was a real breach. When Ridley was in prison, in Queen Mary's reign, he wrote as follows to Hooper: "My dear brother, we thoroughly agree and wholly consent together in those things which are the grounds and substantial points of our religion, against which the world so furiously rageth in these days. In time past, by certain by-matters and circumstances of religion, your wisdom and my simplicity hath a little jarred, each of us following the abundance of his own sense and judgment. But now I say, be you assured, that with my whole heart, God is my witness, I love you in the truth, and for the truth's sake!"

Once delivered from this miserable controversy, Hooper commenced his episcopal duties without a moment's delay. Though only consecrated on the 8th of March, 1551, he began at once to preach throughout the diocese of Gloucester with such diligence as to cause fears about his health. His wife, writing to Bullinger in the month of April, says: "I entreat you to recommend Master Hooper to be more moderate in his labours. He preaches four, or at least three times every day, and I am afraid lest these over-abundant exertions should cause a premature decay." Of all the Edwardian Bishops, none seem to have made such full proof of his episcopal ministry as he did. Cranmer was naturally absorbed in working out the great scheme of Reformation, of which he was the principal architect. Ridley, from his position in London, within reach of the Court and of Lambeth Palace, was necessarily often drawn aside to advise the King and the Primate. For really working a diocese, and giving a splendid pattern of what an English Protestant Bishop should be, the man of the times was John Hooper. We need not wonder that the Government soon gave him the charge of Worcester as well as the diocese of Gloucester. The willing horse is always worked, and the more a man does, the more he is always asked to do.

The state of Hooper's clergy evidently gave him great trouble. We have already seen that many clergy-

men in the diocese of Gloucester were unable to repeat the ten commandments, and could not tell who was the author of the Lord's prayer. Moreover, they were not only ignorant, but generally hostile to the doctrines of the Reformation. However, they were ready to conform to anything, and subscribe anything, so long as they were allowed to keep their livings. Hooper therefore drew up for them a body of fifty Articles of an admirable character, and required every incumbent to subscribe them. He also supplied them with a set of excellent injunctions about their duties. Beside this he appointed some of the better sort to be superintendents of the rest, with a commission to watch over their brethren. It is difficult to see what more he could have done, however painful and unsatisfactory the state of things may have been. The best Bishops, with all their zeal, cannot give grace, or change clerical hearts.

The state of the laity in the diocese of Gloucester was just as unsatisfactory as that of the clergy. This, of course, was only natural. "Like pastors, like people." With them he could of necessity do little, except reprove immorality, and check it, when possible to do so. Of his firm and impartial conduct in this way, a remarkable example is given by John ab Ulmis, in one of the Zurich letters. He says, that Sir Anthony Kingston, a man of rank in Gloucestershire, was cited by the Bishop to appear before him

on a charge of adultery, and was severely reprimanded. He replied with abusive language, and even forgot himself so far as to use violence and blows in the court. But Hooper was unmoved. He reported the whole case to the Privy Council in London, and the result was that the Gloucestershire Knight was severely punished for his contumacy, and fined no less than £500, a very large sum in those days.

The state of the two Cathedrals of Gloucester and Worcester appears to have been as great a trial to Hooper as the state of the parochial clergy and laity. Curiously enough, even 300 years ago, Cathedral bodies seem to have been anything but helps to the Church of England. He says, in a letter upon this subject to Sir William Cecil, the King's Secretary of State,—“Ah! Mr. Secretary, if there were good men in the Cathedral churches! God should then have much more honour than He hath now, the King's majesty more obedience, and the poor people more knowledge. But the realm wanteth light in the very churches where of right it ought most to be.” He then concludes his letter with these touching words: “God give us wisdom and strength wisely and strongly to serve in our vocations. There is none eateth their bread in the sweat of their face, but such as serve in public vocations. Yours, Mr. Secretary, is wonderful, but mine passeth. Now I perceive

private labours be but play, and private work but ease and quietness. God be our help!"

After all, the best account of Hooper's discharge of his episcopal duties, is to be found in that good old book well known by the title of "Fox's Martyrs." Fox was evidently a friend and admirer of Hooper, and writes about him with a very loving pen. But Fox may always be depended on for general accuracy. Bitterly as his many enemies have tried to vilify his great book, they have never succeeded in disproving his facts. They may have scratched the good man's face, but they have never broken his bones. Froude, a thoroughly disinterested witness, has voluntarily declared his confidence in Fox's trustworthiness. Townsend, in a lengthy preface to his excellent and complete edition of the "Acts and Monuments," has answered *seriatim* the attacks of Fox's enemies. In short, we may rest satisfied that those flippant modern writers who call Fox "a liar," are only exposing their own ignorance, or their hatred of genuine Protestantism. Let us now hear how Fox describes Hooper's ways as a Bishop, so long as his episcopate lasted. He says,—

"Master Hooper, after all these tumults and vexations sustained about his investing and princely vestures, at length entering into his diocese, did there employ his time, which the Lord lent him under King Edward's reign, with such diligence as may be

a spectacle to all Bishops which shall ever hereafter succeed him, not only in that place, but in whatsoever diocese through the whole realm of England. So careful was he in his cure, that he left neither pains untaken, nor ways unsought, how to train up the flock of Christ in the true Word of Salvation, continually labouring in the same. Other men commonly are wont, for lucre or promotion's sake, to aspire to bishoprics, some hunting for them, and some purchasing or buying them, as men used to purchase lordships; and when they have them are loth to leave them, and thereupon are loth to commit that thing by worldly laws whereby to lose them.

“To this sort of men Master Hooper was clean contrary; who abhorred nothing more than gain, labouring always to save and preserve the souls of his flock. Who, being Bishop of two dioceses, so ruled and guided either of them, and both together, as though he had in charge but one family. No father in his household, no gardener in his garden, no husbandman in his vineyard, was more or better occupied than he in his diocese amongst his flock, going about his towns and villages in teaching and preaching to the people there.

“That time that he had to spare from preaching, he bestowed either in hearing public causes, or else in private study, prayer, and visiting of schools. With his continual doctrine he adjoined due and discreet correc-

tion, not so much severe to any as to them which for abundance of riches and wealthy state thought they might do what they listed. And doubtless he spared no kind of people, but was indifferent to all men, as well rich as poor, to the great shame of no small number of men now-a-days. Whereas many we see so addicted to the pleasing of great and rich men, that in the mean time they have no regard to the meaner sort of poor people, whom Christ hath bought as dearly as the other.

“ But now again we will return our talk to Master Hooper, all whose life, in fine, was such, that to the Church and all Churchmen it might be a light and example, to the rest, a perpetual lesson and sermon. Finally, how virtuous and good a Bishop he was, ye may conceive and know evidently by this, that, even as he was hated of none but of them which were evil, so yet the worst of them all could not reprove his life in any one jot.

“ I have now declared his usage and behaviour abroad in the public affairs of the Church : and certainly there appeared in him at home no less example of a worthy prelate's life. For though he bestowed and converted the most part of his care upon the public flock and congregation of Christ, for the which also he spent his blood ; yet nevertheless there lacked no provision in him, to bring up his own children in learning and good manners ; insomuch that ye could not discern whether

he deserved more praise for his fatherly usage at home, or for his Bishop-like doings abroad. For everywhere he kept one religion in one uniform doctrine and integrity. So that if you entered into the Bishop's palace, you would suppose yourself to have entered into some church or temple. In every corner thereof there was some smell of virtue, good example, honest conversation, and reading of holy Scriptures. There was not to be seen in his house any courtly rioting or idleness : no pomp at all, no dishonest word, no swearing could there be heard !

As for the revenues of both his Bishoprics, although they did not greatly exceed, as the matter was handled, yet if anything surmounted thereof, he pursed nothing, but bestowed it in hospitality. Twice I was, as I remember, in his house in Worcester, where, in his common hall, I saw a table spread with a good store of meat, and beset full of beggars and poor folk. And I asking his servants what this meant, they told me that every day their lord and master's manner was to have customably to dinner a certain number of the poor folk of the said city, by course, who were served by four at a mess, with whole and wholesome meats. And when they were served (being before examined by him or his deputies, of the Lord's Prayer, the Articles of their faith, and the Ten Commandments) then he himself sat down to dinner, and not before.^b

^b It must be remembered that there was no poor law in those days.

“After this sort and manner Master Hooper executed the office of a most careful and vigilant pastor, by the space of two years and more, so long as the state of religion in King Edward’s time did safely flourish and take place. And would God that all other Bishops would use the like diligence, care, and observance in their function.”

CHAPTER III.

HOOPER'S LAST DAYS.

IMPRISONED ON MARY'S ACCESSION TO THRONE IN 1553—DETAINED IN THE FLEET TILL 1555—SENT TO GLOUCESTER TO BE BURNED FEBRUARY, 1555—DESCRIPTION OF HIS CONDUCT THE TWO LAST DAYS OF HIS LIFE AT GLOUCESTER—ACCOUNT OF HIS LAST SUFFERINGS AT THE STAKE—GENERAL REFLECTIONS.

HOOPER's most useful episcopal labours were brought completely to an end by Queen Mary's accession to the throne, in 1553. They did not last, we may observe, longer than two years. Perhaps it is not too much to say that no Bishop of the Church of England ever did so much for his church and diocese in two years, and left so deep a mark on men's minds in a short period as John Hooper.

Edward the Sixth died in July, 1553 ; and as soon as his Popish sister Mary was fairly seated on her throne, John Hooper's troubles began. The sword of persecution having been once unsheathed, the famous Protestant Bishop of Gloucester was almost the first person who was struck at. He was personally obnoxious both to Bonner and Gardiner, with both of whom he had come into collision. He was renowned all over England as one of the boldest champions of the Reformation, and most thorough opponents of Popery. His friends

warned him that danger was impending, but he calmly replied,—“Once I did flee and took me to my feet. But now, because I am called to this place and vocation, I am thoroughly persuaded to tarry, and to live and die with my sheep.” The threatening storm soon broke. On the 29th of August he appeared before Queen Mary’s Council, at Richmond ; and on the 1st of September he was sent as a prisoner to the Fleet. From that day till 9th February, 1555—a period of more than seventeen months,—he was kept in close confinement. On that day, at last, death set him at liberty, and the noble Protestant prisoner was free.

The history of these sorrowful seventeen months in Hooper’s life would occupy far more space than I have at my disposal. Those who wish to know the particulars of it must study “Fox’s Martyrs.” How the good Bishop of Gloucester and Worcester was cruelly immured in a filthy prison, to the great injury of his health, for nearly a year and a half,—how he was three times examined before such judges as Gardiner, Bonner, Day, Heath, and their companions,—how he was by turns insulted, browbeaten, reviled, entreated and begged to recant,—how gallantly he stood firm by his Protestant principles, and refused to give up a hair’s breadth of Christ’s truth,—how he was finally condemned for holding the right of priests to marry, and for denying the doctrine of transubstantiation,—all these are matters which are fully recorded by the old

Martyrologist. But they are far too long to describe in a biographical paper like that which is now in the reader's hands.

The end came at last. On Monday, the 4th of February, 1555, Hooper was formally degraded by Bishop Bonner, in the chapel of Newgate prison, and handed over to the tender mercies of the secular power. In the evening of that day, to his great delight, he was informed that he was to be sent to Gloucester, and to be publicly burned in his own cathedral city. On Tuesday, the 5th, he commenced his journey on horseback, at four o'clock in the morning, in the charge of six guards. On the afternoon of Thursday, the 7th of February, he arrived safe at Gloucester, amidst the tears and lamentations of a great crowd of people, who came out to meet him on the Cirencester road.

At Gloucester he was lodged in the house of one Ingram, opposite to St. Nicholas church. The house is still standing, and to all appearance not much altered. The city Sheriffs, two men named Jenkins and Bond, would fain have put him in the Northgate prison, but gave up this intention at the earnest intercession of the guards who had brought him from London. One day only was allowed to elapse between the saintly prisoner's arrival and his execution. The greater part of this short interval he spent in prayer. There were however some interviews, of no small interest, of which Fox has preserved a record.

Sir Anthony Kingston, whom he had once offended by rebuking his sins, came to see him, and entreated him, with much affection and many tears, to consult his safety and recant. "Consider," he said, "that life is sweet, and death is bitter. Life hereafter may do good." To this the noble soldier of Christ returned the ever memorable answer: "The life to come is more sweet, and the death to come is more bitter." Seeing him immoveable, Kingston left him with bitter tears, telling him, "I thank God that ever I knew you, seeing God did appoint you to call me to be His child. By your good instruction, when I was before a fornicator and adulterer, God hath taught me to detest and forsake the same." Hooper afterwards said that this interview had drawn from him more tears than he had shed throughout the seventeen months of his imprisonment.

Last of all, as evening drew on, the Mayor, Mr. Loveday, the Aldermen, and Sheriffs of Gloucester, came to his lodging, and courteously saluted him. To them he spoke cheerfully, thanking them for their kindness, requesting that there might be a quick fire at his burning, and protesting that he should die a true obedient subject to the Queen, but "willing to give up his life rather than consent to the wicked papistical religion of the Bishop of Rome."

These interviews got over, the saintly Bishop began to prepare for his wrestle with the last enemy, death. He retired to bed very early, saying that he had many

things to remember, and slept one sleep soundly. The rest of the night he spent in prayer. After he got up, he desired that no man should be allowed to come into the chamber, and that he might be left alone till the hour of execution. What his meditations and reflections were at that awful crisis, God alone knows. Tradition says that he wrote the following piece of poetry with a coal, on the wall of his chamber:—

“Content thyself with patience
With Christ to bear the cup of pain :
Who can and will thee recompense
A thousand-fold, with joys again.
Let nothing cause thy heart to fail :
Launch out thy boat, hoist up the sail,
Put from the shore ;
And be thou sure thou shalt attain
Unto the port, that shall remain
For evermore.

“Fear not death, pass not for bands,
Only in God put thy whole trust ;
For He will require thy blood at their hands,
And thou dost know that once die thou must,
Only for that, thy life if thou give,
Death is no death, but ever for to live.
Do not despair :
Of no worldly tyrant be thou in dread ;
Thy compass, which is God’s Word, shall thee lead,
And the wind is fair.”

These lines were printed in 1559, in a volume of miscellaneous pieces by the Reformers. I give them for what they are worth.

The closing scene of Hooper’s life had now come.

It is so beautifully and simply described by John Fox, that I think it best to give it in its entirety, with trifling exception, just as the worthy old Martyrologist wrote it. He says,—“On the morning of Saturday, the 9th of February, about eight of the clock, came Sir John Bridges, Lord Chandos, with a great band of men, Sir Anthony Kingston, Sir Edmund Bridges, and other commissioners appointed to see execution done. At nine of the clock, Mr. Hooper was willed to prepare himself to be in a readiness, for the time was at hand. Immediately he was brought down from his chamber by the Sheriffs, who were accompanied with bills, and weapons. When he saw the multitude of weapons, he spake to the Sheriffs on this wise: ‘Mr. Sheriffs,’ said he, ‘I am no traitor, neither needed you to have made such a business to bring me to the place where I must suffer; for if ye had willed me, I would have gone alone to the stake, and have troubled none of you.’ Afterward, looking upon the multitude of people that were assembled, being by estimation to the number of 7,000 (for it was market-day, and many also came to see his behaviour towards death), he spake unto those that were about him, saying,—‘Alas! why be these people assembled and come together? Peradventure they think to hear something of me now, as they have in times past; but, alas! speech is prohibited me. Notwithstanding, the cause of my death

is well known unto them. When I was appointed here to be their pastor, I preached unto them true and sincere doctrine, and that out of the Word of God. Because I will not now account the same to be heresy and untruth, this kind of death is prepared for me.'

"So he went forward, led between the two Sheriffs (as it were a lamb to the place of slaughter), in a gown of his host's, his hat upon his head, and a staff in his hand, to stay himself withal; for the grief of the sciatica, which he had taken in prison, caused him somewhat to halt. All the way, being strictly charged not to speak, he could not be perceived once to open his mouth; but beholding the people all the way, which mourned bitterly for him, he would sometimes lift up his eyes towards heaven, and look very cheerfully upon such as he knew; and he was never known, during the time of his being amongst them, to look with so cheerful and ruddy a countenance as he did at that present. When he came to the place appointed where he should die, smilingly he beheld the stake and preparations made for him, which was near unto the great elm-tree over against the college of priests, where he was wont to preach. The place round about, the houses, and the boughs of the trees, were replenished with people; and in the chamber over the college gate, stood the priests of the college.^a

^a This gateway and the window are still standing exactly as they were when Hooper was burned.

Then kneeled he down (forasmuch as he could not be suffered to speak unto the people) to prayer, and beckoned six or seven times unto one whom he knew well, to hear the said prayer, to make report thereof in time to come (pouring tears upon his shoulders and in his bosom), who gave attentive ear unto the same; the which prayer he made upon the whole Creed, wherein he continued the space of half-an-hour. Now, after he was somewhat entered into his prayer, a box was brought and laid before him upon a stool, with his pardon (or at leastwise, it was feigned to be his pardon) from the Queen, if he would turn. At the sight whereof he cried, 'If you love my soul, away with it! If you love my soul, away with it!' The box being taken away, the Lord Chandos said, 'Seeing there is no remedy, dispatch him quickly!' Master Hooper said, 'Good, my lord; I trust your lordship will give me leave to make an end of my prayers.'

"Then said the Lord Chandos to Sir Edmund Bridges' son; which gave ear before to Master Hooper's prayer, at his request: 'Edmund, take heed that he do nothing else but pray; if he do, tell me, and I shall quickly dispatch him.' While this talk was going on, there stepped one or two uncalled, which heard him speak these words following:—

"'Lord,' said he, 'I am hell, but Thou art Heaven; I am a swill and sink of sin, but Thou art a gracious

God and a merciful Redeemer. Have mercy, therefore, upon me, most miserable and wretched offender, after Thy great mercy, and according to Thine inestimable goodness. Thou art ascended into heaven; receive me, hell, to be partaker of Thy joys, where Thou sittest in equal glory with Thy Father. For well knowest Thou, Lord, wherefore I am come hither to suffer, and why the wicked do persecute this thy poor servant: not for my sins and transgressions committed against Thee, but because I will not allow their wicked 'doings to the contaminating of Thy blood, and to the denial of the knowledge of Thy truth, wherewith it did please Thee by Thy Holy Spirit to instruct me; the which with as much diligence as a poor wretch might (being thereto called), I have set forth to Thy glory. And well seest Thou, my Lord and God, what terrible pains and cruel torments be prepared for Thy creature; such, Lord, as without Thy strength none is able to bear, or patiently to pass. But all things that are impossible with man, are possible with Thee. Therefore strengthen me of Thy goodness, that in the fire I break not the rules of patience; or else assuage the terror of the pains, as shall seem most to Thy glory.'

"As soon as the Mayor had espied these men which made report of the former words, they were commanded away, and could not be suffered to hear any more. Prayer being done, he prepared himself to the

stake, and put off his host's gown, and delivered it to the Sheriffs, requiring them to see it restored unto the owner, and put off the rest of his gear, unto his doublet and hose, wherein he would have been burned. But the Sheriffs would not permit that (such was their greediness),^c unto whose pleasures (good man) he very obediently submitted himself; and his doublet, hose, and waistcoat were taken off. Then, being in his shirt, and desiring the people to say the Lord's prayer with him, and to pray for him (who performed it with tears, during the time of his pains), he went up to the stake. Now, when he was at the stake, three irons, made to bind him to the stake, were brought: one for his neck, another for his middle, and the third for his legs. But he, refusing them, said, 'Ye have no need thus to trouble yourselves, for I doubt not but God will give me strength sufficient to abide the extremity of the fire, without bands; notwithstanding, suspecting the frailty and weakness of the flesh, but having assured confidence in God's strength, I am content ye do as ye shall think good.' So the hoop of iron prepared for his middle was brought, and when they offered to have bound his neck and legs with the other two hoops of iron, he utterly refused them, and would have none, saying, 'I am well assured I shall not trouble you.'

^c The clothes of those who were burned, seem to have been the perquisite of the Sheriffs!

“Thus, being ready, he looked upon the people, of whom he might well be seen (for he was both tall and stood also on an high stool), and beheld round about him: and in every corner there was nothing to be seen but weeping and sorrowful people. Then, lifting up his eyes and hands unto heaven, he prayed to himself. By and by, he that was appointed to make the fire, came to him, and did ask his forgiveness. Of whom he asked why he should forgive him; saying, that he knew never any offence he had committed against him. ‘O Sir,’ said the man, ‘I am appointed to make the fire.’ ‘Therein,’ said Mr. Hooper, ‘thou dost nothing offend me: God forgive thee thy sins, and do thine office, I pray thee.’ Then the reeds were cast up, and he received two bundles of them in his own hands, embraced them, kissed them, and put under either arm one of them, and showed with his hand how the rest should be bestowed, and pointed to the place where any did lack.

“Anon commandment was given that the fire should be set to, and so it was. But because there were put to no fewer green faggots than two horses could carry upon their backs, it kindled not by and by, and was a pretty while also before it took the reeds upon the faggots. At length it burned about him, but the wind having full strength in that place (it was a lowering and cold morning), it blew the

flame from him, so that he was in a manner no more but touched by the fire.

“Within a space after, a few dry faggots were brought, and a new fire kindled with faggots (for there were no more reeds), and that burned at his nether parts, but had small power above, because of the wind, saving that it did burn his hair, and scorch his skin a little. In the time of which fire, even as at the first flame, he prayed, saying mildly and not very loud (but as one without pains), ‘O Jesus, the Son of David, have mercy upon me, and receive my soul!’ After the second fire was spent, he did wipe both his eyes with his hands, and beholding the people, he said with an indifferent loud voice, ‘For God’s love, good people, let me have more fire!’ And all this while his nether parts did burn, for the faggots were so few that the flame did not burn strongly at his upper parts.

“The third fire was kindled within a while after, which was more extreme than the other two; and then the bladders of gunpowder brake, which did him small good, they were so placed, and the wind had such power. In the which fire he prayed with somewhat a loud voice, ‘Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me! Lord Jesus, have mercy upon me! Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!’ And these were the last words he was heard to utter. But when he was black in the mouth, and his tongue swollen that he could not speak, yet his lips went till they were shrunk to the

gums ; and he knocked his breast with his hands until one of his arms fell off, and then knocked still with the other, what time the fat, water, and blood dropped out at his fingers' ends, until by renewing of the fire his strength was gone, and his hand did cleave fast in knocking to the iron upon his breast. So immediately, bowing forwards, he yielded up his spirit.

“Thus was he three quarters of an hour or more in the fire. Even as a lamb, patiently he abode the extremity thereof, neither moving forwards, backwards, or to any side ; but having his nether parts burned, and his bowels fallen out, he died as quietly as a child in his bed, and he now reigneth as a blessed martyr in the joys of heaven, prepared for the faithful in Christ before the foundations of the world, for whose constancy all Christians are bound to praise God.” (Fox's Acts and Monuments *in loco*.)

I leave the story of the martyr of Gloucester at this point, having traced his life from his cradle to his fiery grave. He died as he had long lived, true to his colours ; and his death was every way worthy of his life.

Something I might say about the hideous cruelty with which he and his fellow sufferers in Mary's reign were put to death. Nothing can excuse it. The times no doubt were rough and coarse. Capital punishment was fearfully common. Killing people for alleged heresy was unhappily no strange thing.

But these are poor defences of a huge crime. The blood of the English Martyrs is an indelible stain on the Church of Rome. It was a judicial murder that can never be explained away.

Something I might say about the glorious patience and courage which Hooper exhibited throughout his sufferings. As long as the world lasts, he will be a pattern of what Christ can do for His people in the hour of need. Never may we forget that He who strengthened Hooper never changes. He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

Something, not least, I might say about the extreme impolicy of the Church of Rome in making martyrs of Hooper and his companions. Never, I believe, did Popery do herself such damage as when she burnt our Reformers. Their blood was the seed of the Church. The good that they did by their deaths was more than they did all their lives. Their martyrdoms made thousands think who were never reached by their sermons. Myriads, we may depend, came to the conclusion, that a Church which could act so abominably and cruelly as Rome did could never be the one true Church of God: and that a cause which could produce such patient and unflinching sufferers must surely be the cause of Christ and of truth.

But I pass away from these points, however interesting. I only hope that they may be seeds of thought which may bear fruit in men's minds after many days.

CHAPTER IV.

HOOPER'S OPINIONS.

IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING A REFORMER'S THEOLOGICAL VIEWS—DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE SUPPLIED IN PARKER SOCIETY'S VOLUME—QUOTATIONS FROM HOOPER'S "VISITATION ARTICLES" AND "BRIEF CONFESSION OF THE CHRISTIAN'S FAITH"—ENCOURAGEMENT FOR EVANGELICAL CHURCHMEN—A PATTERN FOR BISHOPS—DUTY OF RESISTING PRESENT EFFORT TO UNPROTESTANTIZE ENGLAND—DUTY OF RESISTING RITUALISM—DUTY OF SUPPORTING SUCH AGENCIES AS THE CHURCH ASSOCIATION.

THE last point which I want to bring under the notice of my readers, is one which I feel to be of deep importance. I have supplied some information about Hooper's life and death. I will now ask my readers to give me their attention a little longer, while I say something about Hooper's *opinions*. I have show you / how he lived and died, let me now show you exactly what he thought, and what he taught, and what he preached. I have set before you the man, let me now set before you his doctrine.

If I left my readers under the vague impression that Hooper was a good man and a zealous man and an earnest man, but told them nothing more, I should think I had not done my duty. I want men to understand what theological views the martyred

Bishop of Gloucester held. I want men to see clearly what kind of doctrine was taught by the English Reformers. What kind of things did Hooper say, and preach, and publish, and write? What kind of religion was a Churchman's religion three hundred years ago?

The answer to these inquiries is happily not difficult to find. The two volumes of Hooper's writings published by the Parker Society, make the matter plain as the sun at noon-day. There men may read in unmistakeable language the theological opinions of one of the leading Bishops of the time of the Reformation. From two documents in these two volumes, I will select fair specimens.

The first document I will quote from, is entitled "Articles Concerning Christian Religion, given by the reverend father in Christ, John Hooper, Bishop of Gloucester, unto all and singular deans, parsons, prebends, vicars, curates, and other ecclesiastical ministers within the diocese of Gloucester, to be had, held, and retained of them for unity and agreement, as well for the doctrine of God's Word, as also for the uniformity of the ceremonies agreeing with God's Word."

A more authoritative and weighty declaration of Hooper's opinions, it is impossible to conceive.^a

^a It is worth noticing, that Ridley published many of the same Articles about the same time, for the clergy of the Diocese of London.

The *First Article* enjoins, "that none of the above-named clergy do teach or preach any manner of thing to be necessary for the salvation of men, other than that which is contained in the Book of God's Holy Word, called the Old and New Testament; and that they beware to establish and confirm any manner of doctrine concerning the old superstitious and Papistical doctrines, which cannot be duly and justly approved by the authority of God's Word."

The *Fourth Article* enjoins, "that they and every one of them do diligently teach and preach that the Church of God is the congregation of the faithful, wherein the Word of God is truly preached, and the Sacraments justly administered, according to the institution of Christ, and His doctrine taught unto us by His Holy Word; and that the Church of God is not by God's Word taken for the multitude, or company of bishops, priests, and such others; but that it is the company of all men hearing God's Word and obeying the same, lest any man should be seduced, believing himself to be bound to any ordinary succession of bishops and priests, but only to the Word of God and the right use of the Sacraments."

The *Seventh Article* enjoins, "that they and every one of them do diligently teach and preach the justification only by faith of Jesus Christ, and not by the merit of any man's good works, albeit that good works do necessarily follow justification, which

before justification are of no value or estimation before God."

In the *Ninth Article*, he enjoins them, "that the doctrine of purgatory, pardons, prayer for them that are departed out of this world, the veneration, invocation, and worshipping of saints or images, is contrary and injurious to the honour of Christ, our only Mediator and Redeemer, and also against the doctrine of the first and second commandments of God."

In the *Tenth Article*, he enjoins, "that in the Sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, there is no transubstantiation of the bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ, or any manner of corporal or local presence of Christ, in, under, or with the bread and wine, but spiritually, by faith."

In the *Eleventh Article*, he enjoins, "that they which do unworthily come to baptism or the Supper of the Lord, do not receive the virtue and true effect of the same sacraments, although they receive the natural signs and elements."

In the *Twenty-fourth Article*, he enjoins, "that the Sacraments are not of any force by virtue or strength of any internal work of the same, which of superstition is called *opus operatum*, but only by the virtue and means of the Holy Ghost working in the hearts of the doers and receivers by faith."

In the *Forty-first Article*, he enjoins, "that none of you do counterfeit the Popish Mass, by blessing the

Lord's board, washing your hands or fingers after the Gospel, or receipt of the Holy Communion,—shifting the book from one place to another, laying down and licking the chalice after the Communion, showing the Sacrament openly before the distribution of the same, or making any elevation thereof,—ringing of the sacring bell, or setting any light on the Lord's board."

In the *Forty-third Article*, he enjoins, "Whereas in divine places some use the Lord's board after the form of a table, and some of an altar, whereby disunion is perceived to arise among the unlearned, therefore, wishing a godly unity to be observed in all our dioceses, and for that the form of a table may move more, and turn the simple from the old superstitious opinions of the Popish Mass, and to the right use of the Lord's Supper, we exhort you to erect and set up the Lord's board after the form of an honest table, decently covered, in such place as shall be thought most meet, so that the minister and communicants may be seen, heard, and understood of all the people there present, and that you do take down and abolish all altars. Further, that the minister, in the use of the Communion and prayers thereof, turn his face toward the people."

Such were the visitation articles and injunctions of a Bishop of the time of the Reformation. I turn away from them with one single remark. There are

dioceses at this day in England, in which it might do great good to have the injunctions of good Bishop Hooper distributed among the clergy, and urged on their attention.

The only other document that I shall quote from, is called "A Brief and Clear Confession of the Christian Faith." It deserves special attention, because it was published in 1550, the very year in which the writer was made Bishop of Gloucester. From the "Confession of Faith," I now make the following selections. I make them with considerable difficulty. The whole Confession is so good that it is hard to say what to quote and what to leave behind. I only ask you to remember that the sack is as good as the sample:—

In the *Twenty-sixth Article* of the Confession, Hooper says, "I do believe and confess that Christ, His condemnation is mine absolution; that His crucifying is my deliverance; His descending into hell is mine ascending into heaven; His death is my life; His blood is my cleansing, and purging, by which only I am washed, purified and cleansed from all my sins: so that I neither receive, neither believe any other purgatory, either in this world, or in the other, whereby I may be purged, but only the blood of Jesus Christ, by the which all are purged and made clean for ever."

In the *Twenty-eighth Article* of the Confession

Hooper says, "I believe that the holy Supper of the Lord is not a sacrifice, but only a remembrance and commemoration of this holy sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Therefore it ought not to be worshipped as God, neither as Christ therein contained; who must be worshipped in faith only, without all corruptible elements. Likewise I believe and confess that the Popish Mass is the invention and ordinance of man, a sacrifice of Antichrist, and a forsaking of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, that is to say, of His death and passion; and that it is a stinking and infected sepulchre, which hideth and covereth the merit of the blood of Jesus Christ,—and, therefore, ought the mass to be abolished, and the holy Supper of the Lord to be restored, and set in his perfection again."

In the *Fifty-fourth Article* of the Confession, Hooper says, "I believe that the Word of God is of a far greater authority than the Church; the which Word only doth sufficiently show, and teach us all those things that in any wise concern our salvation, both what we ought to do, and what to leave undone. The same Word of God is the true pattern and perfect rule, after the which all faithful people ought to govern and order their lives, without turning either to the right hand or to the left hand, without changing anything thereof, without putting to it, or taking from it, knowing that all the works of God are perfect, but most chiefly His Word."

In the *Sixty-fourth Article* of the Confession, Hooper says, "I believe that in the holy Sacrament the signs, or badges, are not changed in any point, but the same do remain wholly in their nature; that is to say, the bread is not changed and transubstantiated (as the fond papists, and false doctors do teach, deceiving the poor people), into the body of Jesus Christ, neither is the wine transubstantiated into His blood; but the bread remaineth still bread, and the wine remaineth still wine, every one in his proper and first nature."

In the *Sixty-fifth Article* of the Confession, Hooper says, "I believe that all this Sacrament consisteth in the use thereof; so that without the right use the bread and wine in nothing differ from other common bread and wine, that is commonly used:—and, therefore, I do not believe that the body of Christ can be contained, hid, or inclosed in the bread, under the bread, or with the bread;—neither the blood in the wine, under the wine, or with the wine. But I believe and confess the very body of Christ to be in heaven, on the right hand of the Father (as before we have said), and that always and as often as we use this bread and wine according to the ordinance and institution of Christ, we do verily and indeed receive His body and blood."

In the *Sixty-sixth Article* of the Confession, Hooper says, "I believe that this receiving is not done carnally

or bodily, but spiritually, through a true and lively faith;—that is to say, the body and blood of Christ are not given to the mouth and belly, for the nourishing of the body, but unto our faith, for the nourishing of the spirit and inward man unto eternal life. And for that cause we have no need that Christ should come from heaven to us, but that we should ascend unto Him, lifting up our hearts through a lively faith on high, unto the right hand of the Father, where Christ sitteth, from whence we wait for our redemption; and we must not seek for Christ in these bodily elements.”

I drop my quotations here. I have given enough to make it clear what kind of opinions Hooper held, and what his theological views were. I know not what my readers may think of these quotations. But I will tell you what impression they leave on my mind.

On the one hand, I am deeply thankful to find that Protestant and Evangelical Churchmen are not men of new fangled and modern opinions, but Churchmen of the stamp of the Reformation, Churchmen whose views were held by an eminent Churchman three hundred years ago. Let us take courage. Let us not be moved by the sneers, and taunts, and hard words of High Churchmen, so called. Let them call us “Puritans, Dissenters, Calvinists,” or what they please. We may boldly reply that ours are the old paths, and

that we are the true representatives of the Church of England. If Evangelical Churchmen are wrong, then Hooper was wrong too. If Hooper was right, then we are right. But as for a material difference between our views and those of the martyred Bishop of Gloucester, I defy any one to show that there is any at all.

On the other hand, I deeply regret that English Bishops in modern times do not speak out more frequently in the style and manner of Bishop Hooper. I know their many difficulties, and feel for them. But I heartily wish they would understand what good they might do to the Church, and to their own order, if they would take a leaf out of Hooper's book, and give as certain a sound as he did. We are astounded at the Rome-like charge of one Prelate. We are disgusted with the judicious silence of another. We are sick to death of the well-balanced statements of others. We are tired of being told, with masterly cleverness and fascinating rhetoric, that all parties are a little to blame, and all are a little to be praised; that every body is a little bit right, and every body a little bit wrong! In a word, we are wearied at finding that the bulk of modern English Bishops are honorary members of all schools of opinion. Oh, for a few more Bishop Hoopers on our Bench! Oh, for a little more plain speaking and downright Protestantism!

I know well enough that the English Bishops are Bishops of an eminently tolerant and comprehensive Church. They cannot command perfect unity, convert clergymen, or compel assent to their views, any more than parents can convert their children or clergymen their parishioners. But one thing I always will say : they might speak out more boldly than they generally do, and say out more plainly what they think is truth. If they were only more bold and outspoken, I believe they would be astonished at the good it would do. Nothing, I firmly believe, would so thoroughly rally the middle classes, gather the apathetic lower orders into the Establishment, and strengthen the whole body of the Church, as a little more plain speaking, like that of Bishop Hooper.

My task is done. I have brought together as concisely as possible the times, life, death, and opinions of one of our greatest English Reformers. But I cannot leave off without offering a few practical suggestions to all into whose hands this paper may fall. I address them to each reader personally and directly, and I entreat him to ponder well what I say.

(1) For one thing, I charge you to *resist manfully the efforts now being made to unprotestantize England*, and to bring her once more into subjection to Popery. Let us not go back to ignorance, superstition, priestcraft, and immorality. Our forefathers tried Popery long ago, and threw it off with disgust and indignation.

Let us not put the clock back, and return to Egypt. Let us have no peace with Rome, till Rome abjures her errors and is at peace with Christ.

Read your Bible, and be armed with Scriptural arguments. A Bible-reading laity is a nation's surest defence against error. I have no fear for English Protestantism, if the laity will only do their duty.

Read history, and see what Rome did in days gone by. Read how she trampled on your country's liberties, plundered your forefather's pockets, and kept the whole nation ignorant and immoral. Read Fox, and Strype, and Burnet, and Soames, and Blunt. And do not forget that Rome never changes. It is her boast and glory that she is always the same. Only give her power in England, and she will soon put out the eyes of our country, and make her like Samson, a degraded slave.

Read facts standing out on the face of the globe. What has made Italy what she is? Popery.—What has made Mexico and the South American States what they are? Popery.—What has made Spain and Portugal what they are? Popery.—What has made Ireland what she is? Popery.—What makes Scotland, the United States, and our own beloved England, the powerful, prosperous countries that they are at present, and I pray God they may long continue? I answer in one word, Protestantism,—a free Bible and a Protestant ministry, and the principles of the Reformation. Think

twice before you give ear to the specious arguments of liberalism falsely so called. Think twice before you help to bring back the reign of Popery.

(2) For another thing, I charge you *to beware of Ritualism*, and to do all you can to resist it. Ritualism is the high road to Rome, and the triumph of Ritualism will be the restoration of Popery.

Resist it in little things. Resist strange dresses, processions, banners, incense, candles on the Communion table, turnings to the East, crosses at the East, and extravagant church decorations. Resist them manfully. They seem trifles; but they frequently lead to a great deal of mischief, and they often end in downright Popery.

Resist it in great things. Oppose with might and main the attempt to re-introduce the Popish mass and auricular confession in our parishes. Send your boy to no school where auricular confession is ever tolerated. Allow no clergyman to draw your wife and daughter to private confession. Oppose sternly but firmly the attempt to change the Lord's Supper at your parish churches into the Romish sacrifice of the altar. Draw back from the Communion in such churches, and go elsewhere. The laity have a great deal of power in this matter, even without going to law. The clergy cannot do without the laity, any more than officers in a regiment can do without privates. If the English laity, all over England, would rise in their might, and

say, "We will not have the mass and auricular confession," Ritualism would wither away in a very short time.

Resist it for Christ's sake. His priestly and mediatorial offices are injured and dishonoured by Ritualism. They are offices He has never deputed to any order of ordained men.

Resist it for the Church of England's sake. If Ritualism triumphs, the days of the Church are numbered. The laity will leave her, and she will die for want of Churchmen.

Resist it for the clergy's sake. The worst and cruellest thing that can be done to us, is to lift us out of our proper places, and make us lords over your consciences, and mediators between yourselves and God.

Resist it for the laity's sake. The most degrading position in which laymen can be put is that of being cringing slaves at the foot of a brother sinner.

Resist it, not least, for your children's sake. Do what in you lies to provide, that, when you are dead and gone, they shall not be left to the tender mercies of Popery. As ever you would meet your boys and girls in heaven, take care that the Church of England in your day is maintained a Protestant Church, and preserves her Articles and the principles of the Reformation wholly uninjured and undefiled.

(3) In the last place, I charge you *not to shrink from supporting the efforts made to resist Ritualism* by such

agencies as the Church Association. That society may be weak and young at present; but it is eminently a move in the right direction. It may not be perfect and faultless in all it does; but at any rate it aims at doing the right thing, and it deserves support. Support it by your influence, your money, and your prayers.

Let all who love pure Evangelical religion stand together in these days of division, and not allow crotchets and scruples to keep them asunder. Let the friend of Liturgical Revision drop his favourite panacea for a little space, and put his shoulder to the work of maintaining the Gospel in the Church of England. Let the friend of Revivals not think it misspent time to give his aid in opposing Rome. If Popery once triumph, there will be no more liberty for revivals. We cannot afford to lose friends. Our ranks are already very thin. The Church of England demands of every Protestant and Evangelical Churchman, that he will do his duty.

Things look black in every direction, I freely admit. But there is no cause to despair. The day is not lost. There is yet time to win a battle. Come what will, let us not desert our position, or forsake the good old ship yet. Let us not please our enemies by spiking our guns, and marching out of our fortress without a battle. Rather let us stand to our guns, like good Bishop Hooper, and in God's strength show a bold

front to the foe. The Church of England has done some good in days gone by, and the Church is still worth preserving. If we do go down in the struggle, let us go down with colours flying. But, like the gallant sentinel of Pompeii, let no man leave his post. My own mind is fully made up. I say the Church of England had better perish and go to pieces, than forsake John Hooper's principles and tolerate the sacrifice of the mass, and auricular confession.

BISHOP LATIMER.

CHAPTER V.

LATIMER'S TIMES.

IMPORTANCE OF ENGLISH CHURCH HISTORY—THREE DISTINCT PERIODS IN LATIMER'S LIFE—FIRST PERIOD WHEN POPERY WAS SUPREME—SECOND PERIOD WHEN RELIGION WAS IN A STATE OF TRANSITION—THIRD PERIOD WHEN PROTESTANTISM WAS FULLY DEVELOPED—CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH PERIOD—FOLLY OF OVERESTIMATING THE OLDEN TIMES—IMMENSE DEBT OWING TO THE REFORMATION—DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY OF OUR REFORMERS—INJUSTICE OF DECRYING AND UNDERVALUING THEIR WORK.

THE name of Bishop Latimer is well known to all readers of English Church history. There are, probably, few who have not heard or read that three hundred years ago there was such a queen of England as "bloody Mary,"—and that men were burnt alive in her reign because they would not give up Protestantism,—and that one of these men was Bishop Latimer.

But I want Englishmen to know these things better in the present day. I want them to become thoroughly familiar with the lives, the acts, and the opinions of the leading English Reformers. Their *names* ought to be something better than hackneyed

ornaments to point a platform speech, and rhetorical traps to elicit an Exeter Hall cheer. Their *principles* ought no longer to be vague, hazy shadows "looming in the distance," but something clear, distinct, and well defined before our mind's eyes. My desire is, that men may understand that the best interests of this country are bound up with Protestantism. My wish is, that men may write on their hearts that the well-being of England depends not on commerce, or clever politicians, or steam, or armies, or navies, or gold, or iron, or coal, or corn, but on the maintenance of the principles of the English Reformation.

The times we live in call loudly for the diffusion of knowledge about English Church history. Opinions are boldly broached now-a-days of so startling a nature, that they make a man rub his eyes, and say, "Where am I?" A state of feeling is growing up among us about Romanism and Protestantism, which, to say the least, is most unhealthy. It has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished. Nothing is so likely to check this state of feeling as the production of a few plain facts. If you want to convince a Scotchman, they say you must give him a long argument. If you want to convince an Englishman, you must give him plain facts. Facts are the principal commodity I have brought together in this biographical paper. If any one expects to find in these pages private speculations, or oratorical display, I am afraid he will go away

disappointed ; but if any one likes plain facts, I think I shall be able to supply him with a few.

Does any reader doubt who is a true member of the Church of England? Are you perplexed by the rise and progress of what are foolishly called "Church-views"? Come with me to-day, and pay a visit to one of the Fathers of the English Church. Let us put into the witness-box one of the most honest and out-spoken bishops of the days of the English Reformation. Let us examine the life and opinions of good old Latimer.

Does any reader doubt what is the true character of the Church of Rome? Are you bewildered by some of those plausible gentlemen who tell you there is no fundamental difference between the Anglican and Romish Churches? Are you puzzled by that intense yearning after so-called "Catholic" principles, which distinguishes some misguided churchmen, and which exhibits itself in "Catholic" teaching, "Catholic" ceremonies, "Catholic" books of devotion, and "Catholic" architecture? Come with me to-day, and turn over a few old pages in English history. Let us see what England actually was when Romish teachers instructed the English people, and had things all their own way. Let us see what the Church of Rome does when she has complete power. Let us see how she treats the friends of an open Bible, of private judgment, and of justification by faith. Let us see how the Church of Rome dealt with Bishop Latimer.

In examining the history of Bishop Latimer, the times in which he lived demand attentive consideration. It is impossible to form a just estimate of a man's conduct unless we know the circumstances in which he is placed, and the difficulties with which he has to contend. No one is aware of the whole extent of our obligations to the noble band of English Reformers, who is not acquainted with the actual state of England when they began their work, and the amazing disadvantages under which that work was carried on.

Latimer was born in the reign of Henry VII. He lived through the reigns of Henry VIII., and Edward VI., and was put to death in the reign of Queen Mary. He began life at a period when Popery bore undisputed sway in this country. He witnessed the beginning of the breach between Henry VIII. and Rome, and the establishment of a transition state of Religion in England. He lived to see the full development of Protestantism under Edward VI., and the compilation of a Liturgy and Articles very slightly differing from those we have at this day. About each of these three periods, I must say a few words.

The period of Latimer's life when Popery was supreme in England, was a period of utter spiritual darkness. The depth of superstition in which our worthy forefathers were sunk is enough to make one's hair stand on end. No doubt there were many Lollards,

and followers of Wycliffe, scattered over the land, who held the truth, and were the salt of the nation. But the fierce persecution with which these good men were generally assailed prevented their making much progress. They barely maintained their own ground. And as for the mass of the population, gross darkness covered their minds.

Most of the priests and teachers of religion were themselves profoundly ignorant of everything they ought to have known. They were generally ordained without any adequate examination as to learning or character. Many of them, though they could read their breviaries, knew nothing whatever of the Bible. Some, according to Strype, the historian, were scarcely able to say the Lord's prayer, and not a few were unable to repeat the ten commandments. The prayers of the Church were in the Latin language, which hardly anybody understood. Preaching there was scarcely any, and what there was, was grossly unscriptural and unedifying.

Huge nests of ordained men were dotted over the face of England, in the shape of Abbeys and Monasteries. The inhabitants of these beautiful buildings were seldom very holy and self-denying, and were often men of most profligate and disreputable lives. Their morals were just what might have been expected from "fulness of bread and abundance of idleness." They did next to nothing for the advancement of learning. They did

nothing for the spread of true religion. Two things only they cared for, and those two were to fill their own pockets, and to keep up their own power. For the one purpose they persuaded weak and dying people to give money and land to the Church, under the specious pretence that they would in this way be delivered from purgatory, and their faith proved by their good works. For the other purpose they claimed to hold the keys of the kingdom of heaven. To *them* confession of sins must be made. Without *their* absolution and extreme unction, no man could be saved. Without *their* masses no soul could be redeemed from purgatory. In short, *they* were practically the mediators between Christ and man; and to injure them was the highest offence and sin. Old Fuller tells us for example, that in 1489, a certain Italian got an immense sum of money in England, by "having power from the Pope to absolve people from usury, simony, theft, manslaughter, fornication, and adultery, and all crimes whatsoever, except smiting the clergy and conspiring against the Pope." (i. 532. Tegg's edition.) Such were Romish priests in Latimer's youth, when Popery was last rampant in England. To say that they were generally ignorant, covetous, sensual, and despotic tyrants over the souls and bodies of men, is not saying one jot more than the truth.

When priests in Latimer's youth were men of this stamp, we shall not be surprised to hear that *the people*

were utterly ignorant of true religion. It would have been miraculous indeed, if it had been otherwise, when they had neither sound preaching to hear, nor Bibles to read. A New Testament could not be bought for less than £2 16s. 3d., and the buyer was in danger of being considered a heretic for purchasing it. The Christianity of the vast majority was naturally enough a mere name and form. The Sabbath was a day of sport and pastime, and not a day of solemn worship. Not one in an hundred perhaps could have rightly answered the question, "what shall I do to be saved," or given the slightest account of justification, regeneration, sanctification, the office of Christ, or the work of the Spirit. A man's only idea of the way to heaven generally was, to do as the priest told him, and to belong to "the true Church!" Thus the blind led the blind, and all wallowed in the ditch together.

All the practical religion that the mass of the laity possessed, consisted in prayers to the Virgin Mary and saints, paying the priests to say masses, pilgrimages to holy places, and adoration of images and relics. The list of their superstitious practices would make an appalling catalogue. They hastened to the church for holy water before a thunderstorm. They resorted to St. Rooke in times of pestilence. They prayed to St. Pernel in an ague. Young women, desiring to be married, sought the help of St. Nicholas. Wives, weary of their husbands, betook themselves to St.

Uncumber. One hundred thousand pilgrims visited the tomb of St. Thomas a'Becket, at Canterbury, in one year, in order to help their souls towards heaven. In one year at Canterbury Cathedral, there was offered at Christ's altar, £3 2s. 6d.; on the Virgin Mary's, £63 5s. 6d.; and, on Thomas a'Becket's, £832 12s. 3d. The *images* worshipped were often gross cheats as well as idols. The *relics* worshipped were as monstrous and absurd as the images. As to the bones of saints, there were whole heaps which had been venerated for years, which proved at length to be bones of deer and pigs. These are dreadful things to tell, but they ought to be known. All these things the Church of Rome knew, connived at, sanctioned, defended, taught, and enforced on her members. This was the state of religion in England three hundred and fifty years ago, when the English Reformers were raised up. This was English Christianity in the childhood and youth of Hugh Latimer!

The second period of Latimer's life, during which England was in a state of transition between Romanism and Protestantism, presents many curious features.

We see, on the one hand, a reformation of religion begun by a king from motives which, to say the least, were not spiritual. It would be absurd to suppose that a sensual tyrant like Henry VIII. came to a breach with the Pope for any other reason than that

the Pope crossed his will. We see his pretended scruples about his marriage with Catherine of Arragon bringing him into communication with Cranmer, and Latimer. We see him, *at one time*, so far guided by the advice of these good men that, like Herod, he does many things that are right, and calculated to advance the cause of the Gospel. He makes Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury, and shows him favour to the end of his days. He allows the Bible to be printed in English and placed in churches. He commands images to be broken, and puts down many gross superstitions. He boldly denies the doctrine of the Pope's supremacy. He dissolves the monasteries, and puts to open shame the wickedness of their inmates. All this we see, and are thankful. We see him, *at another time*, defending Popish dogmas, and burning men who, like the martyr Lambert, denied them. We see him putting forth the famous Six Articles, which re-asserted transubstantiation, private masses, clerical celibacy, vows of chastity, auricular confession, and the denial of the cup to the laity. Worst of all, we see in him the marks of a proud, self-willed, sensual man all his life long, and an utter want of evidence that his heart was ever right in the sight of God. The employment of a man who was guilty of such inconsistencies, to do God's work, is among the deep things of God's providence. We cannot understand it. We must wait.

Turning, on the other hand, from Henry VIII. to the first English Reformers, we see in them strong indications of what Fuller calls "a twilight religion." We see them putting forth books in Henry VIII.'s reign, which, though an immense improvement and advance upon Romish teaching, still contain some things which are not Scriptural. Such were "The Necessary Erudition," and the "Institution of a Christian Man." We see them, however, gradually growing in spiritual knowledge, perhaps unawares to themselves, and specially as to the error of transubstantiation. We see them continually checked and kept back, partly by the arbitrary conduct of the king, partly by the immense difficulty of working side by side with a Popish party in the Church, and partly by the great ignorance of the parochial clergy. Nevertheless, on comparing the end of Henry VIII.'s reign with the beginning, we see plain proof that much ground was gained. We learn to admire the overruling power of God, who can use a Henry VIII. just as He did a Nebuchadnezzar or Sennacherib, for the accomplishment of His own purposes. And last, but not least, we learn to admire the patient perseverance of the Reformers. Though they had but little strength, they used it. Though they had but a small door open, they entered in by it. Though they had but one talent, they laid it out heartily for God, and did not bury it in the ground. Though they had but a little

light, they lived fully up to it. If they could not do what they would, they did what they could, and were blessed in their deed. Such was the second period of Latimer's life. Never let it be forgotten that, at this time, the foundations of the Church of England were excavated, and vast heaps of rubbish removed out of the way of the builders who were to follow. Viewed in this light, it will always be an interesting period to the student of Church history.

The last period of Latimer's life, which comprises the reign of Edward VI., is, in many respects, very different from the two periods to which I have already adverted. The cause of English Protestantism made immense progress during Edward's short but remarkable tenure of power. It was truly said of him by Hooker, that "He died young, but lived long, if life be action." Released from the bondage of a tyrannical king's interference, Cranmer and his friends went forward in the work of religious reformation with rapid strides. Bonner and Gardiner were no longer allowed to keep them back. Refusing to take part in the good work, these two Popish prelates were deposed and put to silence. Faithful men, like Ridley and Hooper, were placed on the episcopal bench. An immense clearance of Popish ceremonies was effected. A Liturgy was compiled, which differed very slightly from our present Prayer-book. The forty-two Articles of religion were drawn up, which form the basis of

our own thirty-nine. The first book of Homilies was put forth, in order to supply the want of preachers. An accuracy and clearness of doctrinal statement was arrived at, which had hitherto been unknown. Learned foreigners, like Bucer and Peter Martyr, were invited to visit England, and appointed Regius Professors of Divinity at Oxford and Cambridge. How much further the Reformers might have carried the work of reformation, if they had had time, it is useless now to conjecture. Judging by the changes they effected in a very few years, they would probably have made our Church as nearly perfect as a visible Church can be, if they had not been stopped by Edward's premature death.

There was, however, one thing which the Reformers of Edward the Sixth's reign could not accomplish. They could not change the hearts of the parochial clergy. Thousands of clergymen continued to hold office in the Church of England, who had no sympathy with the proceedings of Cranmer and his party. There was no getting rid of these worthies, for they were ready to promise anything, sign anything, and swear anything, in order to keep their livings. But while they yielded compliance to Cranmer's injunctions and commands, they were graceless, ignorant, and semi-Papists at heart. The questions which Bishop Hooper found it necessary to put to the dean, prebendaries, and clergy of the diocese of Gloucester on his first

visitation, and the answers which he received, furnish us with a sad illustration of the state of English clergymen in Edward the Sixth's time.^a

Facts such as these are painful and astounding; but it is most important that we should know them. They explain at once the ease with which Bloody Mary restored Popery when she came to the throne. Parochial clergymen like those just described were not likely to offer any resistance to her wishes. Facts such as these throw great light on the position of Cranmer and the Reformers of Edward the Sixth's days. We probably have little idea of the immense difficulties both within and without which beset them. Above all, facts such as these give us some idea of the condition of religion in England even in the brightest portion of Latimer's times. If things like these were to be seen when Latimer was an old man, what must have been seen when he was young? If ignorance like this prevailed under Edward VI., how thick must the darkness have been under Henry VIII.!

I must dwell no longer on the subject of Latimer's times. The subject has been already exhausted in Hooper's biography, and I do not wish to weary my readers by a dry and tedious repetition of facts. But I firmly believe that a knowledge of these facts is

^a See Hooper's life, in this volume, page 27.

absolutely essential to a right understanding of the English Reformation, and I therefore hope that the few which I have given will not prove useless.

On calm consideration, I trust my readers will agree with me, that it is the height of absurdity to say, as some do now-a-days, that this country has been a loser by getting rid of Popery. It is really astonishing to hear the nonsense talked "about merry England in the olden times," the "mediæval piety," the "ages of faith," and the "devout habits of our Catholic forefathers."

Walter Scott's fascinating writings and Pugin's beautiful architectural designs, have lent a false glare to Romanism in England, and induced many to doubt whether our Reformation really was a gain. The state of English society, which Scott has sometimes made so interesting by his pen, and Pugin by his pencil, is a far more beautiful thing in poems and pictures than it ever was in honest reality. Depend upon it, that "distance lends enchantment to the view." We may rest satisfied that Netley, and Glastonbury, and Bury, and Fountains, and Melrose, and Bolton Abbeys are much more useful now in ruins than ever they were in Henry the Seventh's days. Few Englishmen probably have the least idea how much we have gained by the Reformation. We have gained light, knowledge, morality, and religious liberty. Few have any clear idea of the fruits which grew on the

tree of Popery when last it flourished in England. Those fruits were ignorance, superstition, immorality, and priestly tyranny. God was angered. Souls were lost, and the devil was pleased.

I trust again my readers will feel with me, that it is most unfair to suppose that the acts and writings of the English Reformers under Henry VIII. are any real criterion of their matured opinions. It is as unfair as it would be to measure the character of a grown up man by his sayings and doings when he was a child.—Cranmer and his helpers under Henry VIII. were in a state of spiritual childhood. They saw many points in religion through a glass darkly. It was not till the reign of Edward VI. that they put away childish things. We must beware, therefore, lest any man deceive us by artfully-chosen quotations drawn from works published in the beginning of the English Reformation. Judge the Reformers, if you will, by their writings in the reign of Edward VI., but not by their writings in the reign of Henry VIII.

I trust, lastly, my readers will agree with me, that it is most unreasonable to decry the early English Reformers, as men who did not go far enough. Such charges are easily made, but those who make them seldom consider the enormous obstacles the Reformers had to surmount, and the enormous evils they had to remove. It is nonsense to suppose they had nothing more to do than to pare the moss off an old building,

and whitewash it afresh. They had to take down an old decayed house, and re-build it from the very ground. It is nonsense to criticise their proceedings, as if they voyaged over a smooth sea, with a fair wind, and a clear course. On the contrary, they had to pilot the ship of true religion through a narrow and difficult strait, against current, wind, and tide. Put all their difficulties together,—the arbitrary, profligate character of Henry VIII., and the tender years of Edward VI.,—the general ignorance of the population—the bitter enmity of dispossessed monks and friars—the open opposition of many of the bishops, and the secret indifference of a vast proportion of the clergy,—put all these things together, weigh them well, and then I think you will not lightly regard the work that the early Reformers did. For my own part, so far from wondering that they did so little, I wonder rather that they did so much. I marvel at their firmness. I am surprised at their success. I see immense results produced by comparatively weak instruments, and I can only account for it by saying, that “God was with them of a truth.”

CHAPTER VI.

LATIMER'S LIFE.

BORN AT THURCASTON, IN LEICESTERSHIRE, 1485—FELLOW OF CLARE HALL, CAMBRIDGE, IN 1509—BEGINS A BIGOTTED PAPIST,—CONVERTED THROUGH BILNEY'S AGENCY—PREACHES PROTESTANTISM AT CAMBRIDGE—IS PATRONIZED BY HENRY VIII.—APPOINTED RECTOR OF WEST KINGTON, WILTS, IN 1531—PREACHES AT BRISTOL—MADE BISHOP OF WORCESTER IN 1535—LABOURS AS BISHOP—RESIGNS HIS BISHOPRIC IN 1539—HIGHLY ESTEEMED BY EDWARD VI.—COMMITTED TO TOWER IN QUEEN MARY'S REIGN—BURNED AT OXFORD 16TH OCTOBER, 1555.

THE next branch of my subject to which I shall invite the attention of my readers, is the story of Bishop Latimer's life.

Hugh Latimer was born about the year 1485, at Thurcaston, near Mount Sorrel, in the county of Leicester. He has left such a graphic account of his father and family in one of his sermons preached before Edward VI., that I must in justice give it in his own words. He says, "My father was a yeoman, and had no lands of his own. He had only a farm of three or four pounds a year at the uttermost, and hereupon he tilled so much as kept half a dozen men. He had walk for one hundred sheep, and my mother milked thirty kine. He was able, and did

bring the king a harness, with himself and his horse, when he came to the place where he should receive the king's wages. I can remember that I buckled his harness, when he went to Blackheath-field. He kept me to school, or else I had not been able to have preached before the king's majesty now. He married my sisters with five pounds apiece, and brought them up in godliness and the fear of God. He kept hospitality for his poor neighbours, and some alms he gave to the poor." (Works, i. 101. Parker's Soc. edition.) Such is the good bishop's homely account of his own family. It is only fair to observe that Latimer is one among the thousand examples on record, that England, with all its faults, is a country where a man may begin very low, and yet live to rise very high.

Latimer was sent to Cambridge at the age of fourteen, and in 1509 was elected a fellow of Clare Hall. We know very little of his early history, except the remarkable fact, which he himself has told us, that up to the age of thirty he was a most violent and bigotted Papist. Just as St. Paul was not ashamed to tell men that at one time he was "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," so the old Protestant Bishop used often to tell how he too had once been the slave of Rome. He says in one of his sermons, "I was as obstinate a Papist as any was in England, insomuch that when I should be made bachelor of divinity, my

whole oration went against Philip Melancthon and his opinions." (Works, i., 334.) He says in another sermon, "All the Papists think themselves to be saved by the law, and I myself was of that dangerous, perilous, and damnable opinion till I was thirty years of age. So long had I walked in darkness and the shadow of death." (i., 137.) He says in a letter to Sir Edward Baynton, "I have thought in times past that if I had been a friar and in a cowl, I could not have been damned nor afraid of death; and by reason of the same I have been minded many times to have been a friar, namely when I was sore sick or diseased. Now I abhor my superstitious foolishness." (i., 332.)

Latimer's testimony about himself is confirmed by others. It is recorded that he used to think so ill of the Reformers, that he declared the last times, the day of judgment, and the end of the world must be approaching. "Impiety," he said, "was gaining ground apace, and what lengths might not men be expected to run, when they began to question even the infallibility of the Pope." Becon mentions that when Stafford, the divinity lecturer, delivered lectures in Cambridge, on the Bible, Latimer was sure to be present, in order to frighten and drive away the scholars. In fact his zeal for Popery was so notorious, that he was elected to the office of cross-bearer in the religious processions of the University, and discharged the duty with becoming solemnity for seven years. Such was the clay of

which God formed a precious vessel meet for His work! Such were the first beginnings of one of the best and most useful of the English Reformers!

The instrument which God used in order to bring this furious Papist to a knowledge of Christ's truth, was a student named Bilney. Bilney was a contemporary of Latimer's at Cambridge, who had for some time embraced the doctrines of the Reformation, and was finally burned as a martyr at Norwich. He perceived that Latimer was a sincere and honest man, and kindly thought it possible that his zeal for Popery might arise from lack of knowledge. He therefore went boldly to him after his public onslaught on Melancthon, and humbly asked to be allowed to make a private confession of his own faith. The success of this courageous step was complete. Old Latimer tells us, "I learned more by his confession than before in many years. From that time forward I began to smell the Word of God, and forsook the school-doctors and such fooleries." (i., 335.) Bilney's conduct on this occasion seems to have been most praiseworthy. It ought to encourage every one to try to do good to his neighbour. It is a shining proof of the truth of the proverb, "A word spoken in season, how good is it!"

Hugh Latimer was not a man to do anything by halves. As soon as he ceased to be a zealous Papist, he began at once to be a zealous Protestant, and gave himself up, body, soul, and mind, to the work of doing

good. He visited, in Bilney's company, the sick and prisoners. He commenced preaching in the University pulpits, in a style hitherto unknown in Cambridge, and soon became famous as one of the most striking and powerful preachers of the day. He stirred up hundreds of his hearers to search the Scriptures and inquire after the way of salvation. Becon, afterwards chaplain to Cranmer, and Bradford, afterwards chaplain to Ridley, both traced their conversion to his sermons. Becon has left us a remarkable description of the effects of his preaching. He says, "None, except the stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart, went away from it without being affected with high detestation of sin, and moved unto all godliness and virtue." (Becon's Works, vol. ii. 224. Parker's Society Edition.)

The consequences of this faithful discharge of ministerial duty were just what all experience might lead us to expect. There arose against Latimer a storm of persecution. Swarms of friars and doctors who had admired him when he carried the cross as a Papist, rose up against him in a body when he preached the cross like St. Paul. The Bishop of Ely forbade his preaching any more in the University pulpits at Cambridge; and had he not obtained permission from Dr. Barnes to preach in the church of the Augustine Friars, which was exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, he might have been silenced altogether. But the malice of his enemies did not stop here.

Complaints were laid against him before Cardinal Wolsey, and he had more than once to appear before him and Tonstall, Bishop of London, on charges of heresy. Indeed, when the circumstances of the times are considered, it is wonderful that Latimer did not at this period of his life share Bilney's fate, and suffer death at the stake.

But the Lord, in whose hand our times are, had more work for Latimer to do, and raised up for him unexpected friends in higher quarters. His decided opinions in favour of Henry the Eighth's divorce from Catherine of Arragon, brought him into communication with Dr. Butts, the King's physician, and ultimately secured to him the favour and patronage of the King himself. In the year 1530 he was made one of the royal chaplains, and preached before the King several times. In the year 1531 the royal favour procured for him an appointment to the living of West Kington, near Chippenham, in Wiltshire; and, in spite of his friend Dr. Butts' remonstrances, he at once left court, and went to reside upon his cure.

At West Kington Latimer was just the same man that he had been latterly at Cambridge, and found the devil just as busy an adversary in Wiltshire as he had found him in the University. In pastoral labours he was abundant. In preaching he was instant in season and out of season, both within his parish and without. This he had full authority to do, by virtue of a general

license from the University of Cambridge. But the more he did, the more angry the idle Popish clergy round West Kington became, and the more they laboured to stop his proceedings. So true is it that human nature is the same in all ages. There is generally a dog-in-the-manger spirit about a graceless minister. He neither does good himself, nor likes any one else to do it for him. This was the case with the Pharisees: they “took away the key of knowledge: they entered not in themselves, and them that were entering in they hindered.” (Luke ii. 52.) And as it was in the days of the Pharisees, so it was in the days of Latimer.

On one occasion the mayor and magistrates of Bristol, who were very friendly to him, had appointed him to preach before them on Easter-day. Public notice had been given, and everybody was looking forward to the sermon with pleasure, for Latimer was very popular in Bristol. Suddenly there came out an order from the Bishop forbidding any one to preach in Bristol without his license. The clergy of the place waited on Latimer, and informed him of the Bishop’s order, and then, knowing well that he had no such license, told him “that they were extremely sorry they were deprived of the pleasure of hearing an excellent discourse from him.” Their hypocritical compliments and regrets were unfortunately ill-timed. Latimer had heard the whole history of the affair.

And he knew well that these smooth-tongued gentlemen were the very persons who had written to the Bishop in order to prevent his preaching.

For four years, while vicar of West Kington, the good man was subjected to a constant succession of petty worrying attacks, and attempts to stop him from doing good. He was cited to London, and brought before Archbishop Warham, and detained many months from home. He was convened before Convocation, and excommunicated and imprisoned for a time. But the protecting care of God seems to have been always round him. His enemies appear to have been marvellously restrained from carrying their malice to extremities. At length, in 1535, the King put a sudden stop to their persecution by making him Bishop of Worcester. That such a man should make such an appointment is certainly very wonderful. Some have attributed it to the influence of Lord Cromwell; some to that of the Queen Anne Boleyn; some to that of Dr. Butts; some to that of Cranmer, who was always Latimer's fast friend. Such speculations are, to say the best, useless. "The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of waters: He turneth it whithersoever He will." (Prov. xxi. 1.) When God intends to give a good man a high office, He can always raise up a Darius to convey it to him.

The history of Latimer's episcopate is short and simple, for it only lasted four years. He was the

same man in a Bishop's palace that he had been in a country parsonage, or a Cambridge pulpit. Promotion did not spoil him. The mitre did not prove an extinguisher to his zeal for the Gospel. He was always faithful—always simple-minded—always about his Father's business—always labouring to do good to souls. Fox, the historian, speaks highly of "his pains, study, readiness, and continual carefulness in teaching, preaching, exhorting, visiting, correcting, and reforming, either as his ability could serve, or the times would bear." But he adds, "the days then were so dangerous and variable that he could not in all things do what he would. Yet what he might do, that he performed to the uttermost of his strength, so that, although he could not utterly extinguish all the sparkling relics of old superstition, yet he so wrought that though they could not be taken away, yet they should be used with as little hurt and as much profit as might be."

In 1536 we find Bishop Latimer appointed by Archbishop Cranmer to preach before the Convocation of the Clergy. No doubt this appointment was made advisedly. Cranmer knew well that Latimer was just the man for the occasion. The sermons he preached are still extant, and fully justify the Archbishop's choice. Two more faithful and conscience-stirring discourses were probably never delivered to a body of ordained men. They will repay an attentive perusal.

“Good brethren and fathers,” he said in one place, “seeing we are here assembled, for the love of God let us do something whereby we may be known to be the children of light. Let us do somewhat, lest we, which hitherto have been judged children of the world, prove even still to be so. All men call us prelates; then seeing we be in council, let us so order ourselves that we be prelates in honour and dignity, that we may be prelates in holiness, benevolence, diligence, and sincerity.

“Lift up your heads, brethren, and look about with your eyes, and spy what things are to be reformed in the Church of England. Is it so hard, so great a matter, for you to see many abuses in the clergy, and many in the laity?”—He then mentions several glaring abuses by name: the state of the Court of Arches and the Bishop’s Consistories—the number of superstitious ceremonies and holidays—the worship of images and visiting of relics and saints—the lying miracles and the sale of masses,—and calls upon them to consider and amend them. He winds up all by a solemn warning of the consequence of Bishops neglecting notorious abuses.—“God will come,” he says. “God will come: He will not tarry long away. He will come upon such a day as we nothing look for Him, and at such an hour as we know not. He will come and cut us in pieces. He will reward us as He doth the hypocrites. He will set us where wailing shall be, my brethren—

where gnashing of teeth shall be, my brethren. These be the delicate dishes prepared for the world's well-beloved children. These be the wafers and junkets provided for worldly prelates: wailing and gnashing of teeth."—"Ye see, brethren, what sorrow and punishment is provided for you if ye be worldlings. If you will not then be vexed, be not the children of the world. If ye will not be the children of the world, be not stricken with the love of worldly things; lean not upon them. If ye will not die eternally, live not worldly. Come, go to; leave the love of your profit: study for the glory and profit of Christ; seek in your consultations such things as pertain to Christ, and bring forth at last somewhat that may please Christ. Feed ye tenderly, with all diligence, the flock of Christ. Preach truly the Word of God. Love the light, walk in the light, and so be ye the children of light while ye are in this world, that ye may shine in the world to come, bright as the stars, with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." (Works, vol. i., p. 50.) Such was a sermon before Convocation by Latimer.

In 1537 we find Bishop Latimer placed on the Commission of Divines for the publication of a book to set forth the truth of religion; the result of which Commission was "the Institution of a Christian man." The same year we find him putting forth some injunctions to the prior of Worcester Convent, a monastic

house not yet dissolved, in which, among other things, he commands the prior to have a whole Bible in English chained in the church. He orders every member of the convent to get himself an English New Testament; he directs a lecture of Scripture to be read in the convent every day, and Scripture to be read at dinner and supper. Shortly afterwards he published injunctions to the clergy of his diocese, in which he commands every one of them to provide himself with a whole Bible, or at any rate with a New Testament, and every day to read over and study one chapter, at the least. He also forbids them to set aside preaching for any manner of observance, ceremonies, or processions, and enjoins them to instruct the children in their respective parishes. All these little facts are deeply instructive. They show us what an Augean stable an English diocese was in Henry the Eighth's day, and what enormous difficulties a reforming Bishop had to overcome.

In 1538 we find Latimer pleading with Lord Cromwell, that Great Malvern Abbey might not be entirely suppressed. He suggests that it should be kept up, "not for monkery," which he says, "God forbid," but "to maintain teaching, preaching, study, and prayer;" and he asks whether it would not be good policy to have two or three of the old monastic houses in every county set apart for such purposes. This was a very wise design, and shows great foresight

of the country's wants. Had it been carried into effect, Durham, St. Bees, Lampeter, King's College, London, and the London College of divinity, would have been unnecessary. The rapacity of Henry the Eighth's courtiers, who had an amazing appetite for the property of the suppressed abbeys, made the suggestion useless.

In 1539 Bishop Latimer's episcopate was brought to an end by the enactment of the six Articles already referred to, in which some of the leading tenets of Romanism were authoritatively maintained. He strenuously withstood the passing of this Act, in opposition to the King and the Parliament; and the result was that he was compelled to resign his bishopric. It is related, that on the day when this happened, when he came back from the House of Lords to his lodgings, he threw off his robes, and leaping up, declared to those who stood about him, that he found himself lighter than he had been for some time.

The next eight years of Latimer's life appear to have passed away in forced silence and in retirement. We read little of anything that he did. We do not exactly know where he spent his time, and whether he returned to his old living at West Kington, or not. The probability is, that he was regarded as a dangerous and suspected man, and had much difficulty in preserving his life. The only certain fact we know is, that he was at length committed to prison as a

heretic, and spent the last year of Henry the Eighth's reign in confinement in the Tower.

When Edward VI. came to the throne, in 1547, Latimer was at once released from prison, and treated with every mark of respect. His old bishopric of Worcester was offered to him, and the House of Commons presented an address to the Protector Somerset, earnestly requesting that he might be re-appointed. Old age and increasing infirmities made Latimer decline the proffered dignity, and he spent the next six years of his life without any office, but certainly not as an idle man. His chief residence during these six years was with his old friend and ally, Archbishop Cranmer, under the hospitable roof of Lambeth Palace. While here he took an active part in all the measures adopted for carrying forward the Protestant Reformation. He assisted Cranmer in composing the first book of Homilies, and was also one of the divines appointed to reform the Ecclesiastical Law, a work which was never completed. All this time he generally preached twice every Sunday. In the former part of Edward the Sixth's reign he preached constantly before the King. In the latter part he went to and fro in the midland counties of England, preaching wherever his services seemed to be most wanted, and especially in Lincolnshire. This was perhaps the most useful period of his life. No one of the Reformers probably sowed the seeds of

sound Protestant doctrine so widely and effectually among the middle and lower classes as Latimer. The late Mr. Southey bears testimony to this: he says, "Latimer, more than any other man, promoted the Reformation by his preaching."

The untimely death of Edward VI. and the accession of Queen Mary to the English throne in 1553, put an end to Latimer's active exertions on behalf of the Gospel. Henceforward he was called to glorify Christ by suffering, and not by doing. The story of his sufferings, and the noble courage with which he endured them is admirably told in "Fox's Martyrs,"—a book which all churchmen in these days ought to study.

As soon as Queen Mary came to the throne, one of the first acts of her government was the apprehension of the leading English Reformers: and Latimer was among the first for whom a warrant was issued. The Queen's messenger found him doing his Master's work as a preacher in Warwickshire, but quite prepared for prison. He had received notice of what was coming six hours before the messenger arrived, from a good man named Careless, and might easily have escaped; but he refused to avail himself of the opportunity. He said, "I go as willingly to London at this present, being called by my Prince to render a reckoning of my doctrine, as ever I went to any place in the world. And I do not doubt but that God, as He hath made me worthy to preach His Word to two excellent

princes, so He will enable me to witness the same unto the third." In this spirit he rode cheerfully up to London, and said, as he passed through Smithfield, where heretics were generally burned, "Smithfield has long groaned for me."

Latimer was at once committed to the Tower, in company with Cranmer, Ridley, and Bradford, and for want of room, all the four were confined in one chamber. There these four martyrs, to use old Latimer's words, "did together read over the New Testament with great deliberation and painful study," and unanimously agreed that transubstantiation was not to be found in it. From the Tower the three bishops were removed to Oxford, in 1554; and there, in 1555, Latimer and Ridley were burnt alive at the stake, as obstinate heretics.

The old Bishop's behaviour in prison was answerable to his previous life. For two long years he never lost his spirits, and his faith and patience never failed him. Much of his time was spent in reading the Bible. He says himself, "I read the New Testament over seven times while I was in prison." Much of his time was spent in prayer. Augustine Bernher, his faithful servant, tells us that he often continued kneeling so long that he was not able to get up from his knees without help. Three things he used especially to mention in his prayers at this time. One was, that as God had appointed him to be a preacher and

professor of His Word, so He would give him grace to stand to His doctrine till his death. Another was, that God would of His mercy restore the Gospel of Christ to the realm once again; he often repeated these two words, "once again." The third was, that God would preserve the princess Elizabeth, and make her a comfort to England. It is a striking fact, that all these three prayers were fully granted.

Latimer's conduct at his various trials and examinations before his Popish persecutors, was in some respects wiser and better than that of the other martyrs. He knew well enough that his death was determined on, and he was quite right. Gardiner, the Popish Bishop of Winchester, had said openly, that "he would have the axe laid at the root of the tree: the bishops and most powerful preachers ought certainly to die." Bonner, the Popish Bishop of London, had said, "God do so to Bonner, and more also, if one of the heretics escape me." Acting on this impression, Latimer told Ridley before the trial, that he should say little.—"They talk of a free disputation," said he, "but their argument will be as it was with their forefathers: 'We have a law, and by our law he ought to die.'"—Acting on this impression, he did little at his various trials but make a simple profession of his faith. He refused to be led away into lengthy discussions about the opinions of the Fathers, like Cranmer and Ridley.

He told his judges plainly, that "the Fathers might be deceived in some points;" and that he only "believed them when they said true, and had Scripture with them!" A wiser and truer remark about the Fathers was probably never made.

The death of old Latimer is so beautifully described by Fox, that I cannot do better than give you the account as nearly as possible in his words. I certainly shall not try to spoil it by any additions of my own, though I must abridge it considerably.

"The place appointed for the execution (says Fox) was on the north side of Oxford, in the ditch over against Balliol College. For fear of any tumult that might arise to prevent the burning, Lord Williams and the householders of the city were commanded by the Queen's letter to be assistant, sufficiently armed; and when all things were in readiness, the prisoners were brought forth together, on the 16th of October, 1555.

"Ridley came first, in a furred black gown, such as he was wont to wear as a Bishop. After him came Latimer, in a poor Bristol frieze frock, all worn, with his buttoned cap and a handkerchief over his head, and a long new shroud hanging over his hose, down to his feet.

"Ridley, looking back, saw Latimer coming after, to whom he said, 'Oh, are ye there?' 'Yea!' said master Latimer, 'as fast as I can follow.' At length

they came to the stake one after the other. Ridley first entered the place, and earnestly holding up both his hands, looked towards heaven. Shortly after, seeing Latimer, he ran to him, embraced and kissed him, saying, 'Be of good cheer, brother, for God will either assuage the fury of the flames, or else strengthen us to abide it.'

"With that he went to the stake, kneeled down by it, kissed it, and prayed; and behind him Latimer kneeled, earnestly calling upon God. After they arose, one talked with another a little while, but what they said Fox could not learn of any man.

"Then they were compelled to listen to a sermon preached by a renegade priest, named Smith, upon the text, 'Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, I am nothing.' They attempted to answer the false statements of this miserable discourse, but were not allowed. Ridley said, 'Well, then, I commit our cause to Almighty God, who shall impartially judge all.' Latimer added his own verse: 'Well, there is nothing hid but it shall be made manifest;' and said, 'He could answer Smith well enough, if he might be suffered.'

"They were commanded after this to make ready immediately, and obeyed with all meekness. Ridley gave his clothes and such things as he had about him to those that stood by, and happy was he that could get any rag of him. Latimer gave nothing, but quietly

suffered his keeper to pull off his hose and his other apparel, which was very simple. And now being stripped to his shroud, he seemed as comely a person to them that stood by as one could desire to see. And though in his clothes he appeared a withered, crooked old man, he now stood quite upright.

“Then the smith took a chain of iron and fastened it about both Ridley’s and Latimer’s middles to one stake. As he was knocking in a staple, Ridley took the chain in his hands, and said to the smith, ‘Good fellow, knock it in hard, for flesh will have its course.’” A bag of gunpowder was tied about the neck of each. Faggots were piled around them, and the horrible preparations were completed.

“Then they brought a faggot kindled with fire, and laid it down at Ridley’s feet, to whom Latimer then spake in this manner: ‘Be of good comfort, brother Ridley, and play the man; we shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust never shall be put out.’

“And so the fire being kindled, when Ridley saw the fire flaming up towards him, he cried with a loud voice, ‘Lord, into thy hands I commend my spirit: Lord, receive my spirit!’ and repeated the latter part often. Latimer, crying as vehemently on the other side of the stake, ‘Father of heaven, receive my soul!’ received the flame as if embracing it. After he had stroked his face with his hands, and as it were bathed

them a little in the fire, he soon died, as it appeared, with very little pain."

"And thus much," says Fox, "concerning the end of this old blessed servant of God, Bishop Latimer, for whose laborious services, fruitful life, and constant death, the whole realm has cause to give great thanks to Almighty God."

Latimer lived and died unmarried, and I am not aware that any English family at this day lays claim to any connection with him. But he left behind him a name far better than that of sons and daughters, a name which will be held in honour by all true English Protestants, so long as the world stands.

"Of all the Marian Martyrs," says Fuller, "Mr. Philpot was the best-born gentleman, Bishop Ridley the profoundest scholar, Mr. Bradford the holiest and devoutest man, Archbishop Cranmer of the mildest and meekest temper, Bishop Hooper of the sternest and austerest nature, Dr. Taylor had the merriest and pleasantest wit, but Mr. Latimer had the plainest and simplest heart."

CHAPTER VII.

LATIMER'S OPINIONS.

HIS GENERAL CHARACTER AS A PREACHER—A BOLD, UNWORLDLY, KIND, AND DILIGENT MAN—IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING HIS THEOLOGICAL VIEWS—HIS OPINIONS ON SCRIPTURE, JUSTIFICATION, REGENERATION, THE LORD'S SUPPER, AND OTHER LIKE POINTS—GENERAL CONCLUSION ON THE DUTY OF NOT BEING ASHAMED OF EVANGELICAL RELIGION, AND OF RESISTING POPERY.

I TURN from the subject of Latimer's life, to his opinions. I have given a brief sketch of his history, from his birth to his death. My readers will easily believe that I have left many things untold.

I might dwell on the good man's *preaching*. Few, probably, have ever addressed an English congregation with more effect than he did. No doubt his sermons now extant would not suit modern taste. They contain many quaint, odd, and coarse things. They are very familiar, rambling, and discursive, and often full of gossiping stories. But, after all, we are poor judges in these days of what a sermon ought to be. A modern sermon is too often a dull, tame, pointless, religious essay, full of measured, round sentences, Johnsonian English, bald platitudes, timid statements, and elaborately concocted milk and water. It is a leaden sword,

without either point or edge: a heavy weapon, and little likely to do much execution. But if a combination of sound Gospel doctrine, plain Saxon language, boldness, liveliness, directness, and simplicity, can make a preacher, few, I suspect, have ever equalled old Latimer.

I might supply many proofs of his *courage and faithfulness as a minister*. He did not shrink from attacking anybody's sins, even if they were the sins of a king. When Henry VIII. checked the diffusion of the Bible, Latimer wrote him a plain-spoken letter, long before he was a Bishop, remonstrating with him on his conduct. He feared God, and nothing else did he fear. "Latimer, Latimer," he exclaimed at the beginning of one of his sermons, "thou art going to speak before the high and mighty King Henry VIII., who is able, if he think fit, to take thy life away. Be careful what thou sayest. But Latimer, Latimer, remember also thou art about to speak before the King of kings and Lord of lords. Take heed that thou dost not displease Him."

I might speak of his *unworldliness*. He gave up a rich bishopric, and retired into private life, for conscience-sake, without a murmur. He refused that same bishopric again, because he felt too old to fulfil its duties, when he might have had it by saying "Yes." I might speak of his *genuine kindness* of heart. He was always the friend of the poor and distressed.

Much of his time, while he stayed at Lambeth, was occupied in examining into the cases of people who applied to him for help. I might speak of his *diligence*. To the very end of his life he used to rise at two o'clock in the morning, and begin reading and study. All this, and much more, I might tell, if I entered into more particulars in this biography.

I trust, however, I have given facts enough to supply some faint idea of what the man was. I trust my readers will agree with me, that he was one of the best bishops this country has ever had, and that it would have been well for the Church of England if more of her bishops had been like Bishop Latimer.

Let us never forget, as we think over the history of his life, that he is a glorious instance of the miracles which the grace of God can work. The Spirit can take a bigotted, fierce Papist and make him a faithful Protestant. Where the hand of the Lord is, nothing is impossible. Let us never think that any friend, relative, or companion is too much opposed to the Gospel to become a true Christian. Away with the idea! There are no hopeless cases under the Gospel. Let us remember Latimer, and never despair.

From all these topics, however interesting, I turn to one which is even more important in the present day. That topic is, the nature of Latimer's theological opinions. For dwelling on this topic at some length I shall make no apology. The circumstances of the

times we live in, invest the subject with more than ordinary importance.

We live in days when very strange statements are made in some quarters, as to the true doctrines of the Church of England. Semi-Popish views about the rule of faith,—about justification,—about regeneration,—about the sacraments,—about preaching, are continually urged upon the attention of congregations, while the advocates and teachers of these views are coolly arrogating to themselves the credit of being the only sound Churchmen.

It is to no purpose that those who repudiate these semi-Popish views challenge their advocates to prove them by Scripture. The ready answer is at once given,—that, whether these views are Scriptural or not, there can be no doubt they are "*Church views*." It is to no purpose that we deny these views are to be found in the Articles, Liturgy, and Homilies of the Church of England, when honestly and consistently interpreted. We are quietly told that we know nothing about the matter. We are stupid! We are dense! We are blind! We are ignorant! We do not understand plain English! They are the true men! Their views are the true "*Church views*;" and if we disagree with them, we must be quite wrong! In short we are left to infer that, if we are honest and consistent, we ought to leave our dear old Church, and give it up to the Ritualists. I appeal to the experience of every one who lives with

his eyes open, and marks the signs of the times. My readers know well I am describing things which are going on in every part of the land.

Now, as matters have come to this pass, let us see whether we cannot throw a little light on the subject by looking back 300 years. Let us inquire what were the views of the men who laid the foundations of the Church of England, and are notoriously the fathers of the Articles, Homilies, and Liturgy. Let us put old Latimer into the witness-box to-day, and see what his opinions were upon the points in dispute. An honoured member of the Church of England at the period when the doctrines of the Church were first brought into shape and form,—a near and dear friend and adviser of Archbishop Cranmer,—an assistant in the composition of the first book of Homilies,—a Bishop whose orthodoxy and soundness were never called in question for a moment by his contemporaries,—if any man knows what a true Churchman ought to hold, Bishop Latimer must surely be that man. If his views are not true “Church” views, I know not whose are!

I ask my readers, then, to bear with me for a few minutes, while I give some extracts from Latimer’s works. Quotations from old writers, I am well aware, are very wearisome, and seldom read. But I want to inform the minds of Englishmen on the important question of the present day, Who is, and who is not, a true Churchman?

(1) First of all, What did Bishop Latimer think about SCRIPTURE? This is a point with which the very existence of true religion is bound up. Some Churchmen tell us now-a-days, notwithstanding the Sixth Article, that the Bible alone is not the rule of faith, and is not able to make a man wise unto salvation. No! it must be the Bible and the Fathers, or the Bible and Catholic tradition, or the Bible and the Church, or the Bible explained by the Prayer-book, or the Bible explained by an episcopally-ordained man, but not the Bible alone. Now let us hear Bishop Latimer.

He says, in a sermon before Edward VI., "I will tell you what a Bishop of this realm once said to me. He sent for me, and marvelled that I would not consent to such traditions as were set out. And I answered him, that I would be ruled by God's book, and rather than depart one jot from it I would be torn by wild horses. I chanced in our communication to name the Lord's Supper. Tush! saith the Bishop. What do you call the Lord's Supper? What new term is this? There stood by him one Dr. Dubber. He dubbed him by-and-by, and said that this term was seldom read in the doctors. And I made answer, that I would rather follow Paul in using his terms than them, though they had all the doctors on their side." (Works, i., 121.)

He says again, in his conference with Ridley: "A layman, fearing God, is much more fit to understand

holy Scripture than any arrogant or proud priest ; yea, than the Bishop himself, be he ever so great and glistering in his pontificals. But what is to be said of the Fathers ? How are they to be esteemed ? St. Augustine answereth, giving this rule,—that we should not therefore think it true because they say so, do they never so much exceed in holiness and learning ; but if they be able to prove their saying by canonical Scripture, or by good probable reasons ; meaning that to be a probable reason, I think, which doth orderly follow upon a right collection and gathering out of the holy Scriptures.

“Let the Papists go with their long faith. Be you contented with the short faith of the saints, which is revealed to us in the Word of God written. Adieu to all Popish fantasies. Amen ! For one man having the Scripture, and good reason for him, is more to be esteemed himself alone, than a thousand such as they, either gathered together, or succeeding one another. The Fathers have both herbs and weeds, and Papists commonly gather the weeds, and leave the herbs.” (Ridley’s Works, p. 114. Parker’s Edition.)

I make no comment on these passages,—they speak for themselves.

(2) In the next place, what did Bishop Latimer think about *justification by faith* ? This is the doctrine which Luther truly called the criterion of a standing or falling Church. This is the doctrine which, in

spite of the Eleventh Article of our Church, many are now trying to obscure, by mingling up with it baptism, the Lord's Supper, our own works, and I know not what besides. Now let us hear Bishop Latimer.

He says, in a sermon preached at Grimsthorpe, Lincolnshire, "Christ reputeth all those for just, holy, and acceptable before God, which believe in Him, which put their trust, hope, and confidence in Him. By His passion which He suffered, He merited that as many as believe in Him shall be as well justified by Him as though they had never done any sin, and as though they had fulfilled the law to the uttermost. For we without Him are under the curse of the law. The law condemneth us. The law is not able to help us. And yet the imperfection is not in the law, but in us. The law itself is holy and good, but we are not able to keep it, and so the law condemneth us. But Christ with His death hath delivered us from the curse of the law. He hath set us at liberty, and promised that when we believe in Him we shall not perish, the law shall not condemn us. Therefore let us study to believe in Christ. Let us put all our hope, trust, and confidence only in Him. Let us patch Him with nothing, for, as I told you before, our merits are not able to deserve everlasting life. It is too precious a thing to be merited by man. It is His doing only. God hath given Him to us to be our Deliverer, and to give us everlasting life." (ii. 125.)

He says again, in another sermon, "Learn to abhor the most detestable and dangerous poison of the Papists, which go about to thrust Christ out of His office. Learn, I say, to leave all Papistry, and to stick only to the Word of God, which teacheth that Christ is not only a judge but a justifier, a giver of salvation, and a taker away of sin. He purchased our salvation through His painful death, and we receive the same through believing in Him, as St. Paul teacheth us, saying, Freely ye are justified through faith. In these words of St. Paul, all merits and estimation of works are excluded and clean taken away. For if it were for our works' sake, then it were not freely, but St. Paul saith *freely*. Whether will you now believe St. Paul or the Papists?" (ii. 147.)

He says again, in another sermon: "Christ only, and no man else, merited remission, justification, and eternal felicity, for as many as will believe the same. They that will not believe it, shall not have it; for it is no more, but believe and have." (i. 421.)

Once more, I say these passages require no comment of mine. They speak for themselves.

(3) In the next place, what did Bishop Latimer think about *regeneration*? This, as you are all aware, is the subject of one of the great controversies of the day. Multitudes of Churchmen, in spite of the Seventeenth Article, and the Homily for Whit-Sunday, maintain that all baptized persons are necessarily regenerate,

and receive grace and the Holy Ghost at the moment they are baptized. In a word, they tell us that every man, woman, and child, who has received baptism, has also received regeneration, and that every congregation in the Church of England should be addressed as an assembly of regenerated persons. Now let us hear **Bishop Latimer.**

He says, in a sermon preached in Lincolnshire, "There be two manner of men. Some there be that be not justified, not regenerate, not yet in the state of salvation, that is to say, not God's servants. They lack the renovation, or regeneration. They be not yet come to Christ." (ii. 7.) He says, in a sermon preached before Edward VI., "Christ saith, Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God. He must have a regeneration. And what is this regeneration? *It is not to be christened in water*, as those firebrands expound it, and nothing else. How is it to be expounded then? St. Peter showeth that one place of Scripture declareth another. It is the circumstance and collection of places that maketh Scripture plain. We be born again, says Peter, and how? Not by a mortal seed, but an immortal? What is the immortal seed? By the Word of the living God: by the Word of God preached and opened. Thus cometh in our new birth." (i. 202.) He says, in another Lincolnshire sermon, "Preaching is God's instrument, whereby He worketh faith in our hearts.

Our Saviour saith to Nicodemus, Except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God. But how cometh this regeneration? By hearing and believing the Word of God: for so saith St. Peter." (i. 471.)

Once more, I say these passages require no comment of mine. They speak for themselves.

(4) In the next place, what did Bishop Latimer think about the *Lord's Supper*? This, I need hardly say, is a subject about which very unprotestant doctrine is often taught in the present day. Some around us, in the face of the Twenty-eighth Article, speak of this sacrament in such a manner, that it is hard to see the difference between their doctrine and Popish transubstantiation, or the sacrifice of the mass. Now let us hear Bishop Latimer.

He says, in his disputation at Oxford, "In the sacrament there is none other presence of Christ required than a spiritual presence. And this presence is sufficient for a Christian man, as the presence by which we abide in Christ and Christ in us, to the obtaining of eternal life, if we persevere in the true Gospel. And this same presence may be called a real presence, because to the faithful believer there is the real and spiritual body of Christ." (ii. 252.) He says, in the same disputation, "Christ spake never a word of sacrificing, or saying of mass; nor promised the hearers any reward but among the idolaters with the

devil and his angels, except they repent speedily. Therefore sacrificing-priests should now cease for ever: for now all men ought to offer their own bodies a quick sacrifice, holy and acceptable before God. The Supper of the Lord was instituted to provoke us to thanksgiving, and to stir us up by preaching of the Gospel to remember His death till He cometh again." (ii. 256.) He says, in his last examination, "There is a change in the bread and wine, and such a change as no power but the omnipotency of God can make, in that that which before was bread should now have the dignity to exhibit Christ's body. And yet the bread is still bread, and the wine is still wine. For the change is not in the nature but the dignity." (ii. 286.) He says, in one of his Lincolnshire sermons, "Whosoever eateth the mystical bread, and drinketh the mystical wine worthily, according to the ordinance of Christ, he receiveth surely the very body and blood of Christ spiritually, as it shall be most comfortable to his soul. He eateth with the mouth of his soul, and digesteth with the stomach of his soul, the body of Christ. And, to be short, whosoever believeth in Christ, putteth his hope, trust, and confidence in Him, he eateth and drinketh Him. For the spiritual eating is the right eating to eternal life, not the corporal eating." (i. 459.)

Once more I say, I make no comment on these passages. They speak for themselves.

It would be easy to multiply quotations of this kind to an endless length, if it were necessary or desirable. There is hardly a controverted subject in the present day on which I could not give some plain, Scriptural, sensible, sound opinion of Bishop Latimer.

Would my readers like to know what he thought about the ordinance of *preaching*? Did he think little of it, as some do in this day, and regard it as a means of grace very subordinate to sacraments and services? No! indeed he did not. He calls it "the office of salvation, and the office of regeneration." He says, "take away preaching, and take away salvation." He says, "this office of preaching is the only ordinary way that God hath appointed to save us all. Let us maintain this, for I know no other." He declares that, "preaching is the thing the devil wrestled most against. It has been all his study to decry this office. He worketh against it as much as he can. He hath made unpreaching prelates, and stirred them up by heaps to persecute this office in the title of heresy." (i. 203, 155, 306, 349, 302.)

Would my readers like to hear what he thought about a *gorgeous ceremonial and candles in Churches*? He says plainly that these things come from the devil. "Where the devil is resident, and hath his plough going, there away with book and up with candles; away with Bible and up with beads; away with the

light of the Gospel and up with the light of candles, yea, even at noon-day. Where the devil is resident, that he may prevail, up with all superstition and idolatry, censuring, painting of images, candles, palms, ashes, holy water, and new services of man's inventing." (i. 71.)

Would my readers like to know what he thought about the *foreign reformers*? Did he lightly esteem them, as some do now-a-days, because they did not retain episcopacy? No! indeed he did not. He says, "I heard say, Melancthon, that great clerk, should come hither. I would wish him, and such as he is, to have £200 a-year. The king would never want it. There is yet among us two great learned men, Peter Martyr and Bernard Ochin, which have a hundred marks a-piece. I would the king would bestow a thousand pounds on that sort." (i. 141.)

Would my readers like to know what he thought about *unity*? Did he think, as some do now, that it is the one thing needful, and that we should give up every thing in order to attain it? No, indeed! He says, "Unity must be according to God's holy Word, or else it were better war than peace. We ought never to regard unity so much that we should forsake God's Word for her sake." (i. 487.)

Would my readers like to know what he thought about *councils and convocations*? Did he regard them as the grand panacea for all ecclesiastical evils, like

those around us, whose cry is, "Give us synodical action, or we die"? He says to Ridley, "Touching councils and convocations, I refer you to your own experience to think of our own country's parliaments and convocations. The more part in my time did bring forth the Six Articles. Afterward the more part did repeal the same. The same Articles are now again restored. Oh, what uncertainty is this!" And he says, in another place, "More credence is to be given to one man having the holy Word of God for him, than to ten thousand without the Word. If it agrees with God's Word, it is to be received. If it agrees not, it is not to be received, though a council had determined it." (Ridley, 130; Latim. i. 288.)

Would my readers like to know what he thought of *thorough-going Protestant preaching*? Did he think, as some do now, that if a sermon contains a good deal of truth, a little false doctrine may be excused and allowed? No! indeed he did not. He says, "Many preach God's Word, and shall preach a very good and godly sermon, but at the last they will have a blanched almond, one little piece of Popery patched in to powder their matter with, for their own lucre and glory. They make a mingling of the way of God and man's way, a mingle-mangle, as men serve pigs in my country." (i. 290.)

I will not multiply these extracts, though it would be easy to do so. Those who have never studied the

works of Latimer, published by the Parker Society, have little idea of the loss they have sustained. They are rich to overflowing with pithy, pointed Protestant truths. I will only ask my readers to remember well whose words I have been quoting, and when they were spoken.

These words were not spoken last year. They did not fall from the lips of modern Evangelical or Low Church clergymen. They were not spoken by the ministers of Park Chapel, Chelsea; or of Portman Chapel; or the Lock; or Belgrave Chapel; or by some platform orator at Exeter Hall. No: the words I have quoted are three hundred years old. They are the words of one of the best bishops the Church of England ever had. They are the words of the man who helped to compose our first book of Homilies. They are the words of the friend and adviser of Archbishop Cranmer. They are the words of one whom king and parliament delighted to honour.

Why was the speaker of these words not cast out of the Church of England? Why was he not reprimanded? Why was he not reviled as a man of low, unchurchman-like opinions? Why was he not proceeded against and persecuted for his views? How is it that he was persecuted only by Papists, but always honoured by Protestants? persecuted by Bonner, Gardiner, and bloody Mary; but honoured by Cranmer, Ridley, and Edward VI.?

I will give a plain answer to these questions. I answer them by saying that, three hundred years ago no man in his senses doubted that Latimer's opinions were the real opinions of the Church of England. I go on further to affirm, that the truest and best members of the Church of England, at the present day, are those whose views are most in harmony with those of good Bishop Latimer. And I say, that to tell men who love the Church of England with deep affection, that they are not sound Churchmen, merely because they agree with Latimer, and not with Laud, is to bring against them a most unfair and unwarrantable charge.

And now let me conclude this biography of Latimer with two practical remarks.

For one thing, let me earnestly exhort my readers, as individuals, *never to be ashamed of holding what are called Evangelical views within the Church of England.* Listen not to those supercilious gentlemen, on the one side, who would have you believe that if you are not high Churchmen, like themselves, you are no Churchmen at all. Listen not to those exceedingly kind friends, on the other side, who try to persuade you that the Established Church is a regular Popish concern, and ought to be left at once. Both these are ancient tricks. Against both these tricks be on your guard.

Do not be bullied out of the Church of England by the High Churchman's assertion, that you are only a

tolerated party, and have no business by his side. No doubt you live in a communion where great freedom of opinion is allowed. But to tell men of Evangelical views that they are merely *tolerated*, is a downright insult to the memory of the Reformers. Let us make answer to people who tell us so, that if they have forgotten Latimer and three hundred years ago, we have not. Let us say that we are not going to desert the Church of Latimer, in order to please men who wish to lord it over God's heritage, and have things all their own way. Sure I am that, if might should ever prevail over right, and the friends of Latimer should be thrust out of the Church by force, and the House of Commons should be mad enough to sanction it,—sure am I that the men thrust out would be better Churchmen than the men left behind.

And do not be wheedled out of the Church by the arguments of men outside, who would probably be glad to be in it if they only saw the way. When the fox, in an old fable, could not reach the grapes, he said they were sour. When the fox, in another fable, lost his tail in a trap, he tried to persuade his friends that foxes did much better without tails, and advised them to get rid of their own. Do not forget the moral of that fable; do not be enticed into biting off your own tails. Rest assured, that with all its faults and defects the Church of England has very high privileges to offer to its members. Think well about these privileges. Do not

be always poring over the defects. Resolve that you will not lightly cast these privileges away.

Above all, never, never forget that Evangelical views are not only theoretically sound, and agreeable to the mind of the Reformers, but that they are also of vital importance to the very existence of the Church of England. Never has our beloved Church stood so low in this country as when Evangelical views have been at zero, and almost forgotten. Never has she stood so high as when the views of Latimer and the Reformers have been honestly preached and carried out. So far from being ashamed of Evangelical opinions, you may be satisfied that the maintenance of them is rapidly becoming a matter of life or death to your own communion. Take away Latimer's views, and I firmly believe the whole Establishment would collapse before the pressure from without, and come to the ground.

For another thing, let me entreat all English readers of this biography to *beware of countenancing any retrograde movement in this country towards the Church of Rome, and to resist such movement by every possible means, from whatever quarter it may come.*

I am sure that this warning is one which the times loudly call for. The Church of Rome has risen up amongst us with renewed strength in the last few years. She does not disguise her hope that England, the lost planet, will soon resume her orbit in the so-

called Catholic system, and once more revolve in blind obedience round the centre of the Vatican. She has succeeded in blinding the eyes of ignorant persons to her real character. She has succeeded in securing the unexpected aid of misguided men within our own Establishment. A hundred little symptoms around us tell us how real the danger is. Laud and the nonjurors are cried up, while Latimer and the Reformers are cried down. Historical works are industriously circulated, in which bloody Mary is praised, and Protestant Elizabeth blamed. A morbid tenderness towards Romanists, and a virulent bitterness towards Dissenters, have sprung up side by side. An unhealthy attention is paid to what is called mediæval taste. Thousands of tracts are sown broad-cast over the land in which the three leading phrases to be seen are generally those three ominous words "*priest*," "*catholic*," and "*church*." The use of the rosary, auricular confession, prayers for the dead, and the "Hail, Mary," are deliberately recommended to the members of the English Church. Little by little, I fear, the edge of English feeling about Popery is becoming blunt and dull. Surely I have good reason to tell my readers to beware of the Church of Rome.

Remember the darkness in which Rome kept England when she last had the supreme power. Remember the gross ignorance and degrading superstitions which

prevailed in Bishop Latimer's youth. Think not for a moment that these are ancient things, and that Rome is changed. The holy coat of Trèves, the winking picture at Rimini, the mental thralldom in which the Papal States are kept, the notorious practices which go on in the Holy City to this day, are all witnesses that Rome, when she has the power, is not changed at all. Remember this, and beware.

Remember the horrible persecutions which Rome carried on against true religion, when she last had uncontrolled sway in this country. Remember the atrocities which disgraced the days of bloody Mary, and the burning of Bishop Latimer. Think not for a moment that Rome is altered. The persecution of Bible readers in Madira, and the imprisonment of the Madiari, are unmistakeable proofs that, after three hundred years, the old persecuting spirit of Rome still remains as strong as ever. Remember this also, and beware.

Shall we, in the face of such facts as these, return to the bondage in which our forefathers were kept? Shall we give up our Bibles, or be content to sue for sacerdotal licence to read them? Shall we submit ourselves humbly to Italian priests? Shall we go back to confessional-boxes and the idolatrous sacrifice of the mass? God forbid! I say for one—God forbid! Let the dog return to his vomit. Let the sow that was washed return to her wallowing in the

mire. Let the idiotic prisoner go back to his chains. But God forbid that Israel should return to Egypt! God forbid that England should go back into the arms of Rome! God forbid that old Latimer's candle should ever be put out!

Let us work, every one of us, if we would prevent such a miserable consummation. Let us work hard for the extension of pure, scriptural, and evangelical religion at home and abroad. Let us labour to spread it among the Jews, among the Roman Catholics, among the heathen. Let us labour not least to preserve and maintain it by every constitutional means in our own Church.

Let us cherish, every one of us, if we would prevent the increase of Romanism,—a brotherly feeling towards all orthodox Protestants, by whatever name they may be called. Away with the old rubbishy opinion, that the Church of England occupies a middle position, a *via media*, between Dissent and Rome. Cast it away, for it is false. We might as well talk of the Isle of Wight being midway between England and France. Between us and Rome there is a gulf, and a broad and deep gulf too. Between us and orthodox Protestant Dissent there is but a thin partition wall. Between us and Rome the differences are about essential doctrines, and things absolutely necessary to salvation. Between us and Dissent the division is about things indifferent,

things in which a man may err, and yet be saved. Rome is a downright open enemy, attacking the very foundation of our religion. Dissent ought to be an ally, and friendly power; not wearing our uniform, nor yet, as we think, so well equipped as we are,—but still an ally, and fighting on the same side. Let not this hint be thrown away! Let us keep up a kind, brotherly feeling towards all who love the same Saviour, believe the same doctrines, and honour the same Bible as ourselves.

Finally let us pray, every one of us, if we would prevent the increase of Romanism,—let us pray night and day that God may preserve this country from Popery, and not deal with it according to its sins. It is a striking fact, that almost the last prayer of good king Edward VI., on his death-bed, was a prayer to this effect: “O my Lord God, defend this realm from Papistry, and maintain Thy true religion.” There was a prayer in the Litany of our Prayer-book, in 1549, which I think never ought to have been cast out of it. “From all sedition, and privy conspiracy, —FROM THE TYRANNY OF THE BISHOP OF ROME, AND ALL HIS DETESTABLE ENORMITIES,—from all false doctrine and heresy,—from hardness of heart, and contempt of Thy Word and commandments, good Lord, deliver us!” To that prayer may we ever be able to say heartily, *Amen, and Amen!*

SAMUEL WARD.

CHAPTER VIII.

WARD'S LIFE.

A SUFFOLK DIVINE VERY LITTLE KNOWN—BORN AT HAVERHILL IN 1577—EDUCATED AT ST. JOHN'S, CAMBRIDGE—LECTURER AT HAVERHILL—MINISTER OF THE TOWER CHURCH, IPSWICH, 1603—HIGHLY ESTEEMED AT IPSWICH—PERSECUTED, AND FINALLY SUSPENDED BY LAUD IN 1635.

SAMUEL WARD, an eminent Suffolk divine, and one of the most famous Puritans of the seventeenth century, is a man whose name is comparatively unknown to most readers of English theology. This is easily accounted for. He wrote but little, and what he wrote has never been reprinted till very lately. Owen, Baxter, Gurnal, Charnock, Goodwin, Adams, Brooks, Watson, Greenhill, Sibbes, Jenkyn, Manton, Burroughs, Bolton, and others, have been reprinted, either wholly or partially. Of Samuel Ward, so far as I can ascertain, not a word has been reprinted for more than two hundred years.

How far Samuel Ward's sermons have deserved this neglect, I am content to leave to the judgment of all students of theology into whose hands his sermons may fall. But I venture the opinion, that it reflects

little credit on the discretion of republishers of old divinity that such a writer as Samuel Ward has been so long passed over. His case, however, does not stand alone. When such works as those of Swinnock, Arrowsmith on John i., Gouge on Hebrews, Airay on Philippians, John Rogers on 1 Peter, Hardy on 1 John, Daniel Rogers on Naaman the Syrian (to say nothing of some of the best works of Manton and Brooks), have been only recently thought worthy of republication, we must not be surprised at the treatment which Ward has received.

As a Suffolk minister, and a thorough lover of Puritan theology, I desire to supply some information about Ward in this biographical paper. I should have been especially pleased if it had been in my power to write a complete memoir of the man and his ministry. I regret, however, to be obliged to say that the materials from which any account of him can be compiled are exceedingly scanty, and the facts known about him are comparatively few. Nor yet, unhappily, is this difficulty the only one with which I have had to contend. It is a very curious circumstance, that no less than three divines named "S. Ward" lived in the first half of the seventeenth century, and were all members of Sydney College, Cambridge! These three were Dr. Samuel Ward, Master of Sydney College, who was one of the English Commissioners at the Synod of Dort, and a cor-

respondent of Archbishop Usher;—Seth Ward, who was successively Bishop of Exeter and Salisbury;—and Samuel Ward of Ipswich, whose sermons are now reprinted. Of these three, the two “Samuels” were undoubtedly the most remarkable men; but the similarity of their names has hitherto involved their biographies in much confusion. I can only say that I have done my best, in the face of these accumulated difficulties, to unravel a tangled skein, and to supply the reader with accurate information.

The story of Samuel Ward’s life is soon told. He was born at Haverhill, in Suffolk, in the year 1577, and was eldest son of the Rev. John Ward, minister of the Gospel in that town. John Ward, the father of Samuel Ward, appears to have been a man of considerable eminence as a minister and preacher. Fuller (in his *Worthies of Suffolk*) says that the three sons together would not make up the abilities of their father. The following inscription on his tomb in Haverhill church is well worth reading:—

JOHANNES WARDE.

Quo si quis scivit scitius,
Aut si quis docuit doctius,
At rarus vixit sanctius,
Et nullus tonuit fortius.

Son of thunder, son of ye dove,
Full of hot zeal, full of true love;
In preaching truth, in living right,—
A burning lampe, a shining light.

LIGHT HERE.

STARS HEREAFTER.

John Ward, after he with great evidence and power of ye Spirite, and with much fruit, preached ye Gospel at Haverill and Bury in Suff. 25 years, was heere gathered to his fathers.

WATCH. Susan, his widdowe, married Rogers, that
 worthy Pastor of Wethersfelde. He left 3 sonnes,
 Samuel, Nathaniel, John, Preachers, who for
 them and theirs, wish no greater blessing
 than that they may continue in beleiving
 and preaching the same Gospel till ye coming
 of Christ. Come, Lord Jesus, come quicklie. WARDE.

WATCH. Death is our entrance into life. WARDE.

Samuel Ward, the subject of this memoir, was admitted a Scholar of St. John's College, Cambridge, on Lady Margaret's foundation, on Lord Burghley's nomination, November 6th, 1594, and went out B.A. of that house in 1596. He was appointed one of the first Fellows of Sydney Sussex College, in 1599, commenced M.A. 1600, vacated his Fellowship on his marriage in 1604, and proceeded B.D. in 1607.

Nothing is known of Ward's boyhood and youth. His entrance on the work of the ministry, the name of the bishop by whom he was ordained, the date of his ordination, the place where he first began to do Christ's work as a preacher, are all things of which apparently there is no record. His first appearance as a public character is in the capacity of Lecturer at his native town of Haverhill. Of his success at Haverhill, Samuel Clark (in his "Lives of Eminent

Persons," p. 154, ed. 1683), gives the following interesting example, in his life of Samuel Fairclough, a famous minister of Kedington, in Suffolk :—

"God was pleased to begin a work of grace in the heart of Samuel Fairclough very early and betimes, by awakening his conscience by the terror of the law, and by bestowing a sincere repentance upon him thereby, and by working an effectual faith in him; and all this was done by the ministry of the Word preached by Mr. Samuel Ward, then Lecturer of Haverhill. Mr. Ward had answered for him in baptism, and had always a hearty love to him. Preaching one day on the conversion of Zaccheus, and discoursing upon his fourfold restitution in cases of rapine and extortion, Mr. Ward used that frequent expression, that no man can expect pardon from God of the wrong done to another's estate, except he make full restitution to the wronged person, if it may possibly be done. This was as a dart directed by the hand of God to the heart of young Fairclough, who, together with one John Trigg, afterwards a famous physician in London, had the very week before robbed the orchard of one Goodman Jude of that town, and had filled their pockets as well as their bellies with the fruit of a mellow pear tree.

"At and after sermon, young Fairclough mourned much, and had not any sleep all the night following ;

and, rising on the Monday morning, he went to his companion Trigg and told him that he was going to Goodman Jude's, to carry him twelve pence by way of restitution for three pennyworth of pears of which he had wronged him. Trigg, fearing that if the thing were confessed to Jude, he would acquaint Robotham their master therewith, and that corporal correction would follow, did earnestly strive to divert the poor child from his purpose of restitution. But Fairclough replied that God would not pardon the sin except restitution were made. To which Trigg answered thus: 'Thou talkest like a fool, Sam; God will forgive us ten times, sooner than old Jude will forgive us once.' But our Samuel was of another mind, and therefore he goes on to Jude's house, and there told him his errand, and offered him a shilling, which Jude refusing (though he declared his forgiveness of the wrong), the youth's wound smarted so, that he could get no rest till he went to his spiritual father Mr. Ward, and opened to him the whole state of his soul, both on account of this particular sin and many others, and most especially the sin of sins, the original sin and depravation of his nature. Mr. Ward received him with great affection and tenderness, and proved the good Samaritan to him, pouring wine and oil into his wounds, answering all his questions, satisfying his fears, and preaching Jesus to him so fully and effectually that he became a true and sincere

convert, and dedicated and devoted himself to his Saviour and Redeemer all the days of his life after.”^a

From Haverhill, Samuel Ward was removed, in 1603, at the early age of twenty-six, to a position of great importance in those days. He was appointed by the Corporation of Ipswich to the office of Town Preacher at Ipswich, and filled the pulpit of St. Mary-le-Tower, in that town, with little intermission, for about thirty years. Ipswich and Norwich, it must be remembered, were places of far more importance two hundred and fifty years ago than they are at the present day. They were the capital towns of two of the wealthiest and most thickly peopled counties in England. Suffolk, in particular, was a county in which the Protestant and Evangelical principles of the Reformation had taken particularly deep root. Some of the most eminent Puritans were Suffolk ministers. To be chosen Town Preacher of a place like Ipswich two hundred and fifty years ago was a very great honour, and shows the high estimate which was set on

^a I think it right to remark that Clark, in all probability, has erred in his *dates* in telling this story. He says that Fairclough was born in 1594, and that the event he has recorded took place when he was thirteen years old. Now, in 1607 Ward had ceased to be Lecturer of Haverhill. Whether the explanation of this discrepancy is that Fairclough was born before 1594, or that he was only nine years old when he stole the pears, or that Ward was visiting at Haverhill in 1607 and preached during his visit, or that Fairclough was at school at Ipswich and not Haverhill, is a point that we have no means of deciding.

Samuel Ward's ministerial character, even when he was so young as twenty-six. It deserves to be remarked that Matthew Lawrence and Stephen Marshall, who were among his successors, were both leading men among the divines of the seventeenth century.

The influence which Ward possessed in Ipswich appears to have been very considerable. Fuller says, "He was preferred Minister *in*, or rather *of*, Ipswich, having a care over, and a love from, all the parishes in that populous place. Indeed, he had a magnetic virtue (as if he had learned it from the loadstone, in whose qualities he was so knowing) to attract people's affections." ^b The history of his thirty years' ministry in the town of Ipswich would doubtless prove full of interesting particulars, if we could only discover them. Unhappily, I can only supply the reader with the following dry facts, which I have found in an antiquarian publication of considerable value, entitled "Wodderspoon's Memorials of Ipswich." They are evidently compiled from ancient records, and throw some useful light on certain points of Ward's history.

Wodderspoon says—"In the year 1603, on All-

^b I suspect that Fuller's remarks about the loadstone refer to a book called "*Magnetis Reductorium Theologium*," which is sometimes attributed to Samuel Ward of Ipswich. But it is more than doubtful whether the authorship of this book does not belong to Dr. Samuel Ward, the Principal of Sydney College, of whom mention has already been made.

Saints' day, a man of considerable eminence was elected as Preacher, Mr. Samuel Ward. The Corporation appear to have treated him with great liberality, appointing an hundred marks as his stipend, and also allowing him £6 13s. 4d. quarterly in addition, for house rent.

"The Municipal Authorities (possibly because of obtaining so able a divine) declare very minutely the terms of Mr. Ward's engagement. In his sickness or absence he is to provide for the supply of a minister at the usual place three times a week, 'as usual hath been.' 'He shall not be absent out of town above forty days in one year, without leave; and if he shall take a pastoral charge, his retainer by the Corporation is to be void. The pension granted to him is not to be charged on the Foundation or Hospital Lands.'

"In the seventh year of James I., the Corporation purchased a house for the Preacher, or rather for Mr. Ward. This house was bought by the town contributing £120, and the rest of the money was made up by free contributions, on the understanding that, when Mr. Ward ceased to be Preacher, the building was to be re-sold, and the various sums collected returned to those who contributed, as well as the money advanced by the Corporation.

"In the eighth year of James I., the Corporation increased the salary of Mr. Ward to £90 per annum, 'on account of the charges he is at by abiding here.'

"In the fourteenth year of James I., Mr. Samuel Ward's pension increased from £90 to £100 yearly.

"The preaching of this divine, being of so free and puritanic a character, did not long escape the notice of the talebearers of the Court; and after a short period, spent in negotiation, Mr. Ward was restrained from officiating in his office. In 1623, August 6th, a record appears in the town books, to the effect that 'a letter from the King, to inhibit Mr. Ward from preaching, is referred to the Council of the town.'"

About the remaining portion of Ward's life, Wodder-
spoon supplies no information. The little that we know about it is gleaned from other sources.

It is clear, from Hackett's life of the Lord Keeper Bishop Williams (p. 95, ed. 1693), that though prosecuted by Bishop Harsnet for nonconformity in 1623, Ward was only suspended temporarily, if at all, from his office as Preacher. Brook (in his "Lives of the Puritans," vol. ii. p. 452), following Hackett, says, that "upon his prosecution in the Consistory of Norwich, he appealed from the Bishop to the King, who committed the articles exhibited against him to the examination of the Lord Keeper Williams. The Lord Keeper reported that Mr. Ward "was not altogether blameless, but a man easily to be won by fair dealing; and persuaded Bishop Harsnet to take his submission, and not remove him from Ipswich. The

truth is the Lord Keeper found that Mr. Ward possessed so much candour, and was so ready to promote the interests of the Church, that he could do no less than compound the troubles of so learned and industrious a divine. He was therefore released from the prosecution, and most probably continued for some time without molestation, in the peaceable exercise of his ministry." Brook might here have added a fact, recorded by Hackett, that Ward was so good a friend to the Church of England, that he was the means of retaining several persons who were wavering about conformity, within the pale of the Episcopal communion.

After eleven years of comparative quiet, Ward was prosecuted again for alleged nonconformity, at the instigation of Archbishop Laud. Prynne, in his account of Laud's trial (p. 361), tells us that, in the year 1635, he was impeached in the High Commission Court for preaching against bowing at the name of Jesus, and against the "Book of Sports," and for having said "that the Church of England was ready to ring changes in religion," and "that the Gospel stood on tiptoe ready to be gone." He was found guilty, was enjoined to make a public recantation in such form as the Court should appoint, and condemned in costs of the suit. Upon his refusal to recant, he was committed to prison, where he remained a long time.

In a note to Brook's account of this disgraceful transaction, which he appears to have gathered out of "Rushworth's Collections" and Wharton's "Troubles of Laud," he mentions a remarkable fact about Ward at this juncture of his life, which shows the high esteem in which he was held at Ipswich. It appears that after his suspension the Bishop of Norwich would have allowed his people another minister in his place ; but "they would have Mr. Ward, or none !"

CHAPTER IX.

WARD'S LAST DAYS.

LAST FOUR YEARS OF WARD'S LIFE VERY IMPERFECTLY KNOWN—
RETIRES TO ROTTERDAM AFTER BEING SILENCED BY LAUD—
RETURNS TO IPSWICH—BURIED IN THE TOWER CHURCH, 1639
—NAME OF HIS WIFE—ACCOUNT OF HIS FUNERAL SERMON—
DESCRIPTION OF HIS PREACHING—EXTRACTS FROM HIS SERMONS.

THE last four years of Ward's life are a subject on which I find it very difficult to discover the truth. Brook says that, after his release from prison, he retired to Holland, and became a colleague of William Bridge, the famous Independent minister of Yarmouth, who had settled at Rotterdam. He also mentions a report that he and Mr. Bridge renounced their Episcopal ordination, and were re-ordained: "Mr. Bridge ordaining Mr. Ward, and Mr. Ward returning the compliment." He adds another report, that Ward was unjustly deposed from his pastoral office at Rotterdam, and after a short interval restored.

I venture to think that this account must be regarded with some suspicion. At any rate, I doubt whether we are in possession of all the facts in the transaction which Brook records. That Ward retired

to Holland after his release from prison, is highly probable. It was a step which many were constrained to take for the sake of peace and liberty of conscience, in the days of the Stuarts. That he was Pastor of a Church at Rotterdam, in conjunction with Bridge,—that differences arose between him and his colleague,—that he was temporarily deposed from his office and afterward restored,—are things which I think very likely. His *re-ordination* is a point which I think questionable. For one thing it seems to me exceedingly improbable, that a man of Ward's age and standing would first be re-ordained by Bridge, who was twenty-three years younger than himself, and afterward re-ordain Bridge! For another thing, it appears very strange that a man who had renounced his Episcopal orders, should have afterwards received an honourable burial in the aisle of an Ipswich church, in the year 1639. One thing only is clear. Ward's stay at Rotterdam could not have been very lengthy. He was not committed to prison till 1635 and was buried in 1639. He "lay in prison long," according to Prynne. At any rate he lay there long enough to write a Latin work, called "A Rapture," of which it is expressly stated that it was composed during his imprisonment "in the Gate House." In 1638, we find him buying a house in Ipswich. It is plain, at this rate, that he could not have been very long in Holland. However, the whole of the transactions at Rotterdam,

so far as Ward is concerned, are involved in some obscurity. Stories against eminent Puritans were easily fabricated and greedily swallowed in the seventeenth century. Brook's assertion that Ward died in Holland, about 1640, is so entirely destitute of foundation, that it rather damages the value of his account of Ward's latter days.

Granting, however, that after his release from prison Ward retired to Holland, there seems every reason to believe that he returned to Ipswich early in 1638. It appears from the town books of Ipswich (according to Wodderspoon), that, in April 1638, he purchased the house provided for him by the town for £140, repaying the contributors the sum contributed by them. He died in the month of March, 1639, aged 62; and was buried in St. Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich, on the 8th of that month. A certified copy of the entry of his burial, in the parish register, is in my possession. On a stone which was laid in his life time in the middle aisle of the church, the following words (according to Clarke's History of Ipswich) are still extant:

“ Watch, Ward ! yet a little while,
And He that shall come, will come.”

Under this stone it is supposed the bones of the good old Puritan preacher were laid; and to this day he is spoken of by those who know his name in Ipswich as

“ Watch Ward.”

It only remains to add, that Ward married, in 1604, a widow named Deborah Bolton, of Isleham, in Cambridge, and had by her a family.^a It is an interesting fact, recorded in the town-books of Ipswich, that after his death, as a mark of respect, his widow and his eldest son Samuel were allowed for their lives the stipend enjoyed by their father, viz., £100 annually. It is also worthy of remark, that he had two brothers who were ministers, John and Nathaniel. John Ward lived and died Rector of St. Clement's, Ipswich; and there is a tablet and short inscription about him in that church. Nathaniel Ward was Minister of Standon, Herts., went to America in 1634, returned to England in 1646, and died at Shenfield, in Essex, 1653.

There is an excellent portrait of Ward still extant in Ipswich, in the possession of Mr. Hunt, solicitor. He is represented with an open book in his right hand, a ruff round his neck, a peaked beard and moustaches. On one side is a coast beacon lighted; and there is an inscription—

“Wathe Ward. *Ætatis suæ* 43. 1620.”

The following extract, from a rare volume called “The Tombstone; or, a notice and imperfect monu-

^a For this fact, and the facts about Ward's degrees at Cambridge, I am indebted to a well-informed writer in “Notes and Queries” for October, 1861.

ment of that worthy man, Mr. John Carter, Pastor of Bramford and Belstead in Suffolk" (1653), will probably be thought to deserve insertion, as an incidental evidence of the high esteem in which Ward was held in the neighbourhood of Ipswich. The work was written by Mr. Carter's son; and the extract describes what occurred at his father's funeral. He says (at pages 26, 27), "In the afternoon, February 4th, 1634, at my father's interring, there was a great confluence of people from all parts thereabout, ministers and others taking up the word of Joash King of Israel, 'O my father! my father! the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!' Old Mr. Samuel Ward, *that famous divine, and the glory of Ipswich*, came to the funeral, brought a mourning gown with him, and offered very respectfully to preach the funeral sermon, seeing that such a congregation was gathered together, and upon such an occasion. But my sister and I durst not give way to it; for our father had often charged us in his lifetime, and upon his blessing, that no service should be at his burial. 'For,' said he, 'it will give occasion to speak some good things of me that I deserve not, and so false things will be uttered in this pulpit.' Mr. Ward rested satisfied, and did forbear. But the next Friday, at Ipswich, he turned his whole lecture into a funeral sermon for my father, in which he did lament and honour him, to the great satisfaction of the whole auditory."

I have now brought together all that I can discover about Samuel Ward's history. I heartily regret that the whole amount is so small, and that the facts recorded about him are so few. But we must not forget that the best part of Ward's life was spent in Suffolk, and that he seldom left his own beloved pulpit in St. Mary-le-Tower, Ipswich.^b That he was well known by reputation beyond the borders of his own county, there can be no doubt. His selection to be a Preacher at St. Paul's Cross, in 1616, is a proof of this. But it is vain to suppose that the reputation of a preacher, however eminent, who lives and dies in a provincial town, will long survive him. In order to become the subject of biographies, and have the facts of his life continually noted down, a man must live in a metropolis. This was not Ward's lot; and, consequently, at the end of two hundred years, we seem to know little about him.

It only remains to say something about Ward's Sermons and Treatises, which have been lately for the first time reprinted, and made accessible to the modern reader of theology.^c It must be distinctly understood that these reprints do not comprise the whole of

^b It seems that he expounded half the Bible during his ministry in Ipswich! See his preface to "The Happiness of Practice."

^c Ward's sermons are to be found in Nichol's valuable series of reprints of Puritan divines, at the end of the third volume of Adams' works.

Ward's writings. Beside these Sermons and Treatises, he wrote, in conjunction with Yates, a reply to Montague's famous book, "*Appello Cæsarem*." There is also reason to think that he published one or two other detached sermons beside those which are now reprinted. I think, however, there can be little doubt that the nine Sermons and Treatises which have been lately republished by Mr. Nichol, are the only works of Samuel Ward which it would have been worth while to reprint, and in all probability the only works which he would have wished himself to be reproduced.

Of the merits of these sermons, the reading public will now be able to form an opinion. They were thought highly of in time past, and have received the commendation of very competent judges. Fuller testifies that Ward "had a sanctified fancy, dexterous in designing expressive pictures, representing much matter in a little model." Doddridge says that Ward's "writings are worthy to be read through. His language is generally proper, elegant, and nervous. His thoughts are well digested, and happily illustrated. He has many remarkable veins of wit. Many of the boldest figures of speech are to be found in him, beyond any English writer, especially apostrophes, prosopopœias, dialogisms, and allegories."^d This praise may at first sight seem extravagant. I shall, however,

^d How Doddridge could possibly have made the mistake of supposing that Ward died at the age of 28, is perfectly inexplicable!

be disappointed if those who take the trouble to read Ward's writings do not think it well deserved.

It is only fair to Samuel Ward to remind the readers of his works, that at least three of the nine Sermons and Treatises now re-printed, were not originally composed with a view to publication. The sermons entitled "A Coal from the Altar," "Balm from Gilead to Recover Conscience," and "Jethro's Justice of the Peace," would appear to have been carried through the press by friends and relatives. They have all the characteristics of compositions intended for ears rather than for eyes, for hearers rather than for readers. Yet I venture to say that they are three of the most striking examples of Ward's gifts and powers, out of the whole nine. The peroration of the sermon on Conscience, in particular, appears to me one of the most powerful and effective conclusions to a sermon which I have ever read in the English language.*

The *doctrine* of Ward's sermons is always thoroughly Evangelical. He never falls into the extravagant language about repentance, which disfigures the writings of some of the Puritans. He never wearies us with the long supra-scriptural, systematic statements

* The engraved title pages of two of the nine Sermons, in the edition of 1636, are great curiosities in their way. The one which is prefixed to the "Woe to Drunkards," is intended to be a hit at the degeneracy of the times in which Ward lived. If it was really designed by Ward himself, it supplies some foundation for the rumour that he had a genius for caricaturing.

of theology, which darken the pages of others. He is always to the point, always about the main things in Divinity, and generally sticks to his text. To exalt the Lord Jesus Christ as high as possible, to cast down man's pride, to expose the sinfulness of sin, to spread out broadly and fully the remedy of the Gospel, to awaken the unconverted sinner and alarm him, to build up the true Christian and comfort him,—these seem to have been objects which Ward proposed to himself in every sermon. And was he not right? Well would it be for the churches if we had more preachers like him!

The *style* of Ward's sermons is always eminently simple. Singularly rich in illustration,—bringing every day life to bear continually on his subject,—pressing into his Master's service the whole circle of human learning,—borrowing figures and similes from everything in creation,—not afraid to use familiar language such as all could understand,—framing his sentences in such a way that an ignorant man could easily follow him,—bold, direct, fiery, dramatic, and speaking as if he feared none but God,—he was just the man to arrest attention, and to keep it when arrested, to set men thinking, and to make them anxious to hear him again. Quaint he is undoubtedly in many of his sayings. But he preached in an age when all were quaint, and his quaintness probably struck no one as remarkable. Faulty in taste he is

no doubt. But there never was the popular preacher against whom the same charge was not laid. His faults, however, were as nothing compared to his excellencies. Once more I say, Well would it be for the churches if we had more preachers like him!

The *language* of Ward's sermons ought not to be passed over without remark. I venture to say, that in few writings of the seventeenth century will there be found so many curious, old-fashioned, and forcible words as in Ward's sermons. Some of these words are unhappily obsolete, and unintelligible to the multitude, to the grievous loss of English literature.

I cannot help expressing my earnest hope that the scheme of republication, which owes its existence to Mr. Nichol, may meet with the success which it deserves, and that the writings of men like Samuel Ward may be read and circulated throughout the land.

I wish it for the sake of the Puritan divines. We owe them a debt, in Great Britain, which has never yet been fully paid. They are not valued as they deserve, I firmly believe, because they are so little known.^f

^f To regard the Puritans of the seventeenth century, as some appear to do, as mere ranting enthusiasts, is nothing better than melancholy ignorance. Fellows and Heads of Colleges, as many of them were, they were equal, in point of learning, to any divines of their day. To say that they were mistaken in some of their opinions, is one thing; to speak of them as "unlearned and ignorant men," is simply absurd, and flatly contrary to facts.

I wish it for the sake of the Protestant Churches of my own country, of every name and denomination. It is vain to deny that we have fallen on trying times for Christianity. Heresies of the most appalling kind are broached in quarters where they might have been least expected. Principles in theology which were once regarded as thoroughly established, are now spoken of as doubtful matters. In a time like this, I believe that the study of some of the great Puritan divines is eminently calculated, under God, to do good and stay the plague. I commend the study especially to all young ministers. If they want to know how powerful minds and mighty intellects can think out deep theological subjects, arrive at decided conclusions, and yet give implicit reverence to the Bible, let them read Puritan divinity.

I fear it is not a reading age. Large books, especially, have but little chance of perusal. Hurry, superficiality, and bustle are the characteristics of our times. Meagreness, leanness, and shallowness are too often the main features of modern sermons. Nevertheless, something must be attempted in order to check existing evils. The Churches must be reminded that there can be no really powerful preaching without deep thinking, and little deep thinking without hard reading. The republication of our best Puritan divines I regard as a positive boon to the Church and the world, and I heartily wish it God speed.

The following extracts from Ward's sermons may give some idea of what this famous divine was as a preacher.

The first extract is from a sermon entitled "Christ is all in all."—

"All let Him be in all our thoughts and speeches. How happy were it if He were never out of our sight and minds, but that our souls were directed towards Him, and fixed on Him, as the sunflower towards the sun, the iron to the loadstone, the loadstone to the polestar. Hath He not for that purpose resembled Himself to all familiar and obvious objects:^g to the light, that so often as we open our eyes we might behold Him; to bread, water, and wine, that in all our repasts we might feed on Him;^h to the door, that in all our out and ingoing we might have Him in remembrance? How happy if our tongues would ever run upon that name, which is honey in the mouth, melody in the ear, jubilee in the heart. Let the mariner prate of the winds, the merchant of his gain, the husbandman of his oxen.ⁱ Be thou a Pythagorean to all the world, and a Peripatecian to Christ; mute to all vanities, and eloquent only to Christ, that gave man his tongue and his speech. How doth Paul delight to record it, and harp upon it eleven times in ten verses,

^g Musculus et Brentius in Johannem.

^h Bernard.

ⁱ Nolanus.

which Chrysostom^j first took notice of. (1 Cor. i. 10.) And how doth worthy Fox grieve to forsee and foretel that which we hear and see come to pass, that men's discourses would be taken up about trifles and nifles, as if all religion lay in the flight and pursuit of one circumstance or opinion; how heartily doth he pray, and vehemently wish that men would leave jangling about ceremonies, and spend their talk upon Him that is the substance; that learned men would write of Christ, unlearned men study of Him, preachers make Him the scope and subject of all their preaching.^k And what else, indeed, is our office but to elevate, not a piece of bread, as the Romish priests, but Christ in our doctrine; to travail in birth till He be formed in a people, to crucify Him in their eyes by lively preaching His death and passion. The old emblem of St. Christopher is good, representing a preacher as one wading through the sea of this world, staying on the staff of faith, and lifting up Christ aloft to be seen of men. What else gained John the name of the divine, and Paul of a wise master builder, but that he regarded not, as the fashion is now-a-days, to have his reading, memory, and elocution, but Christ known, and Him crucified, and to build the Church skilfully, laying the foundation upon this Rock,^l of which, if we hold our peace, the rocks themselves will cry. This being

^j In Præfat. ad Concionem de Christo crucifixo.

^k Philip Melancthon in Rhetor.

^l Lutherus.

the sum of our art and task, by the help of Christ, to preach the Gospel of Christ, to the praise of Christ, without whom a sermon is no sermon, preaching no preaching.^m

“The sum of the sum of all is, that the whole duty of all men is to give themselves wholly to Christ, to sacrifice not a leg, or an arm, or any other piece, but soul, spirit, and body, and all that is within us;ⁿ the fat, the inwards, the head and hoof, and all as a holocaust to Him, dedicating, devoting ourselves to His service all the days and hours of our lives, that all our days may be Lord’s days. To whom, when we have so done, yet must we know we have given Him so much less than His due, as we worms and wretched sinners are less than the Son of God, who knew no sin. To Him therefore let us live, to Him therefore let us die. So let us live to Him that we may die in Him, and breathe out our souls most willingly into His hands, with the like affection that John of Alexandria, surnamed the Almoner, for his bounty, is reported to have done, who, when he had distributed all he had to the poor, and made even with his revenues, as his fashion was yearly to do in his best health, thanked God he had now nothing left but his Lord and Master Christ, whom He longed to be with, and would now with unlimed and unen-

^m Perkins in *Prophetica*.

ⁿ Nazianzenus de *Spiritu*.

tangled wings fly unto : or as, in fewer words, Peter of old and Lambert of later times, ‘Nothing but Christ, nothing but Christ.’” (Ward’s Sermons, p. 10. Nichol’s edition.)

The second extract is from a sermon on Conscience, entitled “Balm from Gilead.”—

“Hearken, O consciences ! hear the word of the Lord. I call you to record this day, that it is your office to preach over our sermons again, or else all our sermons and labours are lost. You are the cuds of the soul, to chew over again. Against your reproofs, and against your secret and faithful admonitions, what exception can any take ? Your balm is precious ; your smitings break not the head, nor bring any disgrace. God hath given you a faculty to work wonders in private and solitude. Follow them home, therefore, cry aloud in their ears and bosoms, and apply what hath now and at other times been delivered.

“Conscience, if the house and owner where thou dwellest be a son of peace, let thy peace and thy Master’s peace abide and rest on him ; that peace which the world never knows, nor can give, nor take away. Be thou propitious and benign, speak good things, cherish the least sparks and smoke of grace ; if thou findest desire in truth, and in all things, bid them not fear and doubt of their election and calling. With those that desire to walk honestly, walk thou

comfortably. Handle the tender and fearful gently and sweetly; be not rough and rigorous to them. Bind up the broken-hearted. Say unto them, Why art thou so disquieted and sad? When thou seest them melancholy for losses and crosses, say unto them in cheer, as Elkanah to Hannah, 'What dost thou want? Am not I a thousand friends, wives, and children unto thee?'

"Clap them on the back, hearten them in well-doing, spur them on to walk forward; yea, wind them up to the highest pitch of excellency, and then applaud them. Delight in the excellent of the earth.

"Be a light to the blind and scrupulous.

"Be a goad in the sides of the dull ones.

"Be an alarm and trumpet of judgment to the sleepers and dreamers.

"But as for the hypocrite, gall him and prick him at the heart. Let him well know that thou art God's spy in his bosom, a secret intelligencer, and wilt be faithful to God.

"Bid the hypocrite walk 'in all things.'

"Bid the civil add piety to charity.

"Bid the wavering, inconstant, and licentious 'walk constantly.'

"Bid the lukewarm and common Protestant for shame amend, be zealous, and 'walk honestly.'

"But with the sons of Belial, the profane scorers, walk frowardly with them, haunt and molest them,

give them no rest till they repent, be the gall of bitterness unto them. When they are swilling and drinking, serve them as Absalom's servants did Amnon, stab him at the heart. Yet remember, so long as there is any hope, that thine office is to be a pedagogue to Christ, to wound and kill, only to the end they may live in Christ, not so much to gaster and affright as to lead to Him; and, to that purpose, to be instant in season and out of season, that they may believe and repent.

“But if they refuse to hear, and sin against thee, and the Holy Ghost also, then shake off the dust of thy feet, and either fall to torment them before their time, and drive them to despair; or if thou give them ease here, tell them thou wilt fly in their throat at the day of hearing, when thou shalt and must speak, and they shall and must hear.

“Conscience, thou hast commission to go into princes' chambers and council tables; be a faithful man of their counsel. Oh, that they would in all courts of Christendom set policy beneath thee, and make thee president of their councils, and hear thy voice, and not croaking Jesuits, sycophants, and liars. Thou mayest speak to them, subjects must pray for them, and be subject, for thy sake, to honour and obey them in the Lord.

“Charge the courtiers not to trust in uncertain favours of princes, but to be trusty and faithful, as

Nehemiah, Daniel, Joseph ; whose histories pray them to read, imitate, and believe above Machiavelli's oracles.

“Tell the foxes and politicians, that make the *main* the *by*, and the *by* the *main*, that an ill conscience hanged Ahithopel, overthrew Haman, Shebna, etc. Tell them it is the best policy, and Solomon's, who knew the best, to get and keep thy favour ; to exalt thee, and thou shalt exalt them, be a shield to them, and make them as bold as the lion in the day of trouble, not fearing the envy of all the beasts of the forest, no, nor the roaring of the lion, in righteous causes.

“Conscience, thou art the judge of judges, and shalt one day judge them ; in the meanwhile, if they fear neither God nor man, be as the importunate widow, and urge them to do justice. Oh, that thou satest highest in all courts, especially in such courts as are of thy jurisdiction, and receive their denomination from thee, suffer not thyself to be exiled, make Felix tremble, discourse of judgment to them.

“To the just judges, bid them please God and thee, and fear no other fear ; assure them, for whatever they do of partiality or popularity, thou wilt leave them in the lurch ; but what upon thy suit and command, thou wilt bear them out in it, and be their exceeding great reward.

“If thou meetest in those courts and findest any

such pleaders as are of thine acquaintance and followers, be their fee and their promoter, tell them, if they durst trust thee, and leave Sunday works, bribing on both sides, selling of silence, pleading in ill causes, and making the law a nose of wax, if they durst plead all and only rightful causes, thou hast riches in one hand, and honour in the other, to bestow on them.

“As for the tribe of Levi, there mayest thou be a little bolder, as being men of God, and men of conscience, by profession. Be earnest with them to add *con* to their *science*, as a number to cyphers, that will make it something worth. Desire them to preach, not for filthy lucre or vainglory, but for thy sake ; wish them to keep thee pure, and in thee to keep the mystery of faith ; assure them thou art the only ship and cabinet of orthodoxal faith, of which, if they make shipwreck by laziness and coveteousness, they shall be given over to Popery and Arminianism, and lose the faith, and then write books of the apostacy, and intercession of faith, and a good conscience, which they never were acquainted withal, nor some drunkards of them ever so much as seemed to have.” (Ward’s Sermons, p. 109. Nichol’s edition.)

I make no comment on the extracts I have given. I think they speak for themselves. No doubt tastes and opinions about sermons differ widely. But it is my own deliberate judgment, that a man who preaches in the style of Ward will never lack hearers.

RICHARD BAXTER.

CHAPTER X.

BAXTER'S TIMES.

IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING HISTORY OF SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
—DECLINE OF PROTESTANTISM UNDER STUARTS—CHARACTER
OF LAUD—ESTIMATE OF THE CIVIL WAR OF THE COMMON-
WEALTH—ESTIMATE OF OLIVER CROMWELL—SUICIDAL BLIND-
NESS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND—FOLLY OF THE ACT OF
UNIFORMITY.

I MUST ask the reader of this biography to look back to times long gone by, to look back some two hundred years. I feel this is rather a bold request to make. Progress is the order of the day in which you live. "Go a-head" has become a familiar expression wherever English is spoken. "Forwards" is the motto of the times. Few are willing to look back.

But there are subjects about which it is well to look behind us. There are matters in which a knowledge of the past may teach us wisdom for the present and the future. The history of religion is preeminently such a subject and matter. Steam, electricity, railways, and gas, have made a wonderful difference in the temporal condition of mankind in the last two hundred

years. But all this time the Bible and the hearts of men have remained unaltered. That which men did and thought in religious matters two hundred years ago, they are capable of doing and thinking again. What they thought and did in England in the seventeenth century it is well to know.

And just as there are subjects about which it is wise to look behind us, so also there are times long gone by which deserve our special attention. There are times when the character of a nation receives an indelible impression from events which take place in a single generation. There have been times when the dearest privileges of a people have been brought to the birth, and called into vigorous existence, through the desperate agony of civil war and religious strife. Such, I take leave to say, were the times of which I am about to speak in this biography. To no times are Englishmen so deeply indebted for their civil and religious liberty as the times in which Baxter lived. To no body of men do they owe such an unpaid debt of gratitude as they do to that noble host of which Baxter was a standard bearer: I mean the Puritans. To no man among the Puritans are the lovers of religious freedom under such large obligations as they are to Richard Baxter.

I am fully sensible of the difficulties which surround the subject. It is a subject which few historians handle fairly, simply because they do not understand

spiritual religion. To an unconverted man the religious differences of the day of the Puritans must necessarily appear foolishness. He is no more qualified to give an opinion about them than a blind man is to talk of pictures. It is a subject which no clergyman of the Church of England can approach without laying himself open to misrepresentation. He will be suspected of disaffection to his own Church if he speaks favourably of men who opposed Bishops. But it is a subject on which it is most important for Englishmen to have distinct opinions, and I must ask for it a patient hearing. If I can correct some false impressions, if I can supply a few great principles to guide men in these perilous times, I feel I shall have done my readers an essential service. And if I fail to interest them in "Baxter and his Times," I am sure the fault is not in the subject, but in me.

The times in which Baxter lived comprehend such a vast amount of interesting matter, that I must of necessity leave many points in their history entirely untouched.

My meaning will be plain when I say that he was born in 1615, and died in 1691. Nearly all his life was passed under the dynasty of a house which reigned over England with no benefit to the country and no credit to itself: I mean the Stuarts. He lived through the reign of James I., Charles I., Charles II., and James II., and was buried in the reign of William

III. He was in the prime of health and intellectual vigour all through the days of the Commonwealth and the civil wars. He witnessed the overthrow of the Monarchy and the Church of England, and their subsequent re-establishment. He was a cotemporary of Cromwell, of Laud, of Strafford, of Hampden, of Pym, of Monk, of Clarendon, of Milton, of Hale, of Jeffreys, of Blake. In his days took place the public execution of an English Monarch, Charles I. ; of an Archbishop of Canterbury, Laud ; and of a Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Strafford. Within the single period of his life are to be found the plague, the fire of London, the Westminster Assembly, the Long Parliament, the Savoy Conference, and the rejection of two thousand of the best ministers of the Church of England by the Act of Uniformity. Such were the eventful times in which Baxter lived. I cannot, of course, pretend to enter fully into them. Their history forms a huge picture, like the moving panorama of the Mississippi, which it is utterly impossible to take in at a glance. I shall simply try to fix attention on a few of the leading features of the picture, and I shall choose those points which appear to me most likely to be useful in the present day.

One remarkable feature in the history of Baxter's times is *the move backward from the principles of the Protestant Reformation*, which commenced in his youth. Doctrines and practices began to be main-

tained, both by preachers and writers in the Church of England, which Latimer and Jewell would never have sanctioned. Sound Evangelical teaching was decried and run down, under the specious name of Calvinism. Good bishops, like Davenant, were snubbed and reprimanded. Bad bishops, like Montague and Wren, were patted on the back and encouraged. Preaching and lecturing were depreciated, and forms and ceremonies were exalted. The benefits of Episcopacy were extravagantly magnified. Candlesticks and crosses, and all manner of Popish ornaments, were introduced into some of the churches. The sanctity of the Lord's Day was invaded by the abominable "Book of Sports," and common people were encouraged to spend Sunday in England as it is now spent in France. The communion tables, which up to this time had stood in the middle of the chancel, were removed to the east end of the churches, put behind rails, and profanely called "altars." Against all these sapping and mining operations, some, no doubt, protested loudly; but still the sappers and miners went on.

The prime agent in the whole movement was Archbishop Laud. Whether that unhappy man really intended to re-unite the Church of England with the Church of Rome is a question which will probably never be settled till the last day. One thing is very certain,—that no one could have played the game of Rome more thoroughly than he did.

Like many a mischief-maker before and since, Laud pulled the house upon his own head. He raised a storm at length, before which the Church, the Throne, and the Bishops, all went down together, and in the midst of which he himself was put on his trial and lost his life. But the Church of England received an injury in Laud's days from which it has never entirely recovered. Since his time there never has been wanting a succession of men amongst its ministers who have held most of Laud's principles, and occasionally have boldly walked in his steps. So true are the words of Shakspeare,—

“The evil that men do lives after them.”

The harm that Queen Mary did to the Church of England was nothing compared to the harm done by Laud.

We must never underrate the mischief that one bold, bad man can do, and especially in matters of religion. The seeds of error are like thistle-down. One head of a thistle scattered by the wind will sow a whole field. One Tom Paine can rear up infidels all over the world. One Laud can leaven generations with untold mischief. Never let us suppose that Tractarianism is a legitimate child of the Church of England. It is not so. It was scarcely heard of till the time of the Stuarts. Never let us suppose that Tractarianism is a new invention of these latter days. It is not so. It is two hundred years old. The father of

Tractarians and Ritualists is Archbishop Laud. Let us remember these things, and we shall have learned something from Baxter's times.

Another remarkable feature in the history of Baxter's times, is *the famous civil war between Charles I. and his Parliament.*

All war is an evil—a necessary evil sometimes—but still an evil; and of all wars, the most distressing is a civil war. It is a kind of huge family quarrel. It is a struggle in which victory brings no glory, because the strife has been the strife of brethren. Edge Hill, and Newbury, and Marston Moor, and Naseby, and Worcester, are names which call up none but painful reflections. The victors in each battle had spilt the blood of their own countrymen, and lessened the general strength of the nation.

But there is a point of view in which the civil war between Charles I. and his Parliament was peculiarly distressing. I allude to the striking fact, that the general irreligion and immorality of the King's party did more to ruin his cause than all the armies which the Parliament raised. There were hundreds and thousands of steady, quiet men, who, at the beginning of the war, were desirous to be still, and help neither side. But when they found that a man could not read his Bible to his dependents and have prayer in his family without being persecuted as a Roundhead, they felt obliged, in self-defence, to join the Parlia-

mentary forces. In plain words, the wickedness and profligacy of many of the Cavaliers drove godly men into the ranks of their enemies. That there was plenty of hypocrisy, fanaticism, and enthusiasm on the Parliamentary side I make no question. That there were some good men among the Cavaliers, such as Lord Falkland, I do not deny. But, after every allowance, I have no doubt there was far more true religion among those who fought for the Parliament than among those who fought for the King.

The result of the civil war, under these peculiar circumstances, never need surprise any one who knows human nature. The drinking, swearing, roystering troopers, who were led by Prince Rupert, and Wilmot, and Goring, proved no match for the praying, psalm-singing, Bible-reading men whom Cromwell, and Fairfax, and Ireton, and Harrison, and Fleetwood, and Desborough, brought into the field. The steadiest men will in the long run make the best soldiers. A side which has a strong religious principle among its supporters will seldom be a losing one. "Those who honour God, God will honour; and they that despise Him shall be lightly esteemed."

I shall dismiss the subject of the civil war with one general remark and one caution.

My general remark is, that, deeply as we must regret the civil war, we must in fairness remember that we probably owe to it the free and excellent Constitution

which we possess in this country. God can bring good out of evil. The oscillations of England between despotism and anarchy, and anarchy and despotism, for many years after the breach between Charles I. and the House of Commons, were certainly tremendously violent. Still we must confess, that great political lessons were probably imprinted on the English mind at that period, of which we are reaping the benefit at this very day. Monarchs were taught that, like planets in heaven, they must be content to move in a certain orbit, and that an enlightened people would not be governed and taxed without the consent of an unfettered House of Commons. Nations were taught that it is a far easier thing to pull to pieces than to build, and to upset an ancient monarchy than to find a government which shall be a satisfactory substitute. Many of the foundations of our choicest national privileges, I make no doubt, were laid in the Commonwealth times. We shall do well to remember this. We may rest satisfied that this country owes an immense debt of gratitude to Brooke, and Hampden, and Eliot, and Whitelock, and Pym.

The caution I wish to give respects the execution of Charles I. We shall do well to remember that the great bulk of the Puritans were entirely guiltless of any participation in the trial and death of the King. It is a vulgar error to suppose, as many do, that the

whole Parliamentary party are accountable for that wicked and impolitic act. The immense majority of the Presbyterians protested loudly against it. Baxter tells us expressly in his autobiography, that, together with many other ministers, he declared his abhorrence of it, and used every exertion to prevent it. The deed was the doing of Cromwell and his immediate adherents in the army, and it is at their door that the whole guilt must lie. That the great body of the Puritans espoused the Parliamentary side there is no doubt. But as to any abstract dislike to royalty, or assent to King Charles's death, the Puritans are entirely innocent. Let us remember this, and we shall have learned something from the history of Baxter's times.

The next feature in the history of Baxter's times, to which I shall venture to call attention, is *the rise and conduct of that remarkable man, Oliver Cromwell.*

There are few men on whose character more obloquy has been heaped than Oliver Cromwell. He has been painted by some as a monster of wickedness and hypocrisy. Nothing has been too bad to say of him. Such an estimate of him is simply ridiculous. It defeats the end of those who form it. They forget that it is no compliment to England to suppose that it would so long tolerate the rule of such a monster. The man who could raise himself from being the son of a brewer at Huntingdon to be the most successful general of his age, and absolute dictator of this

country for many years, must, on the very face of facts, have been a most extraordinary man.

For my own part I say frankly, that I think we ought to consider the estimate of Cromwell, which Carlyle and D'Aubigné have formed, to be a near approach to the truth. I own I cannot go the lengths of the latter writer. I dare not pronounce positively that Cromwell was a sincere Christian. I leave the question in suspense. I hazard no opinion about it, one way or the other, because I do not find sufficient materials for forming an opinion. If I were to look at his private letters only, I should not hesitate to call him a converted man. But when I look at some of his public acts, I see much that appears to me very inexplicable. And when I observe how doubtfully Baxter and other good men, who were his contemporaries, speak of him, my hesitancy as to his spirituality is much increased. In short, I turn from the question in a state of doubt.

That Oliver Cromwell was one of the greatest Englishmen that ever lived, I feel no doubt at all. No man, perhaps, ever won supreme power by the sword, and then used that power with such moderation as he did. England was probably more feared and respected throughout Europe, during the short time that he was Protector, than she ever was before, or ever has been since. His very name carried terror with it. He declared that he would make the name of an Eng-

lishman as great as ever that of a Roman had been. And he certainly succeeded. He made it publicly known that he would not allow the Protestant faith to be insulted in any part of the world. And he kept his word. When the Duke of Savoy began to persecute the Vaudois in his days, Cromwell interfered at once on their behalf, and never rested till the Duke's army was recalled from the villages, and the poor people's goods and houses restored. When certain Protestants at Nismes, in France, were threatened with oppressive usage by the French government, Cromwell instructed his ambassador at Paris to insist peremptorily, that proceedings against them should be dropped, and in the event of a refusal, to leave Paris immediately. In fact, it was said that Cardinal Mazarin, the French Minister, would change countenance when Cromwell's name was mentioned ; and that it was almost proverbial in France, that the Cardinal was more afraid of Cromwell than of the devil. As for the Pope, he was so dreadfully frightened by a fleet which Cromwell sent into the Mediterranean, under Blake, to settle some matters with the Duke of Tuscany, that he commanded processions to be made in Rome, and the host to be exposed for forty hours, in order to avert the judgments of God, and save the Church. In short, the influence of English Protestantism was never so powerfully felt throughout Europe as it was in the days of Oliver Cromwell.

I will only ask my readers to remember, in addition to these facts, that Cromwell's government was remarkable for its toleration, and this, too, in an age when toleration was very little understood,—that his private life was irreproachable,—and that he enforced a standard of morality throughout the kingdom which was, unhappily, unknown in the days of the Stuarts. Let us remember all these things, and then I think we shall not lightly give way to the common opinion that Cromwell was a wicked and hypocritical man. Let us rest assured that his character deserves far better treatment than it has generally received hitherto. Let us regard him as one who, with all his faults, did great things for our country. Let not those faults blind our eyes to the real greatness of his character. Let us give him a high place in the list of great men before our mind's eye. Let us do this, and we shall have learned something from Baxter's times.

There is one more feature in the history of Baxter's times which I feel it impossible to pass over. I allude to *the suicidal blindness of the Church of England under the Stuarts*.

I touch on this subject with some reluctance. I love the Church of which I am a minister, heartily and sincerely. But I have never found out that my Church lays claim to infallibility, and I am bound to confess that in the times of the Stuarts she committed some tremendous mistakes. Far be it from me

to say that these mistakes were chargeable upon all her members. Abbot, and Carlton, and Davenant, and Hall, and Prideaux, and Usher, and Reynolds, and Wilkins, were bright exceptions among the bishops, both as to doctrine and practice. But, unhappily, these good men were always in a minority in the Church ; and the manner in which the majority administered the affairs of the Church is the subject to which I wish to call attention. We ought to know something about the subject, because it serves to throw immense light on the history of our unhappy religious divisions in this country. We ought to know something of it, because it is one which is intimately bound up with Baxter's life.

One part of the suicidal blindness of the Church to which I have referred was its long-continued attempt to compel conformity, and prohibit private religious exercises, by pains and penalties. A regular crusade was kept up against everybody who infringed its canons, or did anything contrary to its rubrics. Hundreds and thousands of men, for many years, were summoned before magistrates, fined, imprisoned, and often ruined ; not because they had offended against the Gospel or the Ten Commandments, not because they had made any open attack on the Churches, but merely because they had transgressed some wretched ecclesiastical by-law, more honoured in the breach than in the observance ; or because they tried by quiet, private

meetings, to obtain some spiritual edification over and above that which the public services of the Church provided. At one time we read of good men having their ears cut off and their noses slit, for writing unfavourably of bishops! This was the fate of the father of Archbishop Leighton. At another time we read of an enactment by which any one present at a meeting of five or more persons, where there was any exercise of religion in other manner than that allowed by the Liturgy of the Church of England, was to be fined, or imprisoned for three months for the first offence, six months for the second offence, and for the third, transported for seven years! Many were afraid to have family prayer if more than four acquaintances were present! Some families had scruples about saying grace if five strangers were at table! Such was the state of England in the seventeenth century under the Stuarts.

The result of this miserable policy was just exactly what might have been expected. There arose a spirit of deep discontent on the part of the persecuted. There sprung up among them a feeling of disaffection to the Church in which they had been baptized, and a rooted conviction that a system must necessarily be bad in principle which could bear such fruits. Men became sick of the very name of the Liturgy, when it was bound up in their memories with a fine or a gaol. Men became weary of episcopacy, when they found

that bishops were more frequently a terror to good works than to evil ones. The words of Baxter, in a striking passage on this subject in his autobiography, are very remarkable: "The more the bishops thought to cure schism by punishment, the more they increased the opinion that they were persecuting enemies of godliness, and the captains of the profane."

And who that knows human nature can wonder at such a state of feeling? The mass of men will generally judge an institution by its administration, more than by its abstract excellencies. When plain Englishmen saw that a man might do almost anything so long as he did not break an ecclesiastical canon;—when they saw that people might gamble, and swear, and get drunk, and no one made them afraid, but that people who met after service to sing psalms and join in prayer were heavily punished;—when they saw that godless, ignorant, reprobate, profligate spend-thrifts, sat under their own vines and fig-trees in peace, so long as they conformed and went to their parish churches, but that humble, holy, conscientious, Bible-reading persons, who sometimes went out of their parishes to church, were severely fined;—when they found that Charles the Second and his boon companions were free to waste a nation's substance in riotous living, while the saints of the nation, like Baxter and Jenkyn, were rotting in gaols;—I say, when plain Englishmen saw these things, they found

it hard to love the Church which did them. Yet all this might often have been seen in many counties of England under the Stuarts. If this was not suicidal blindness on the part of the Church of England, I know not what is. It was helping the devil, by driving good men out of her communion. It was literally bleeding herself to death.

The crowning piece of folly which the majority in the Church of England committed under the Stuarts, was procuring the Act of Uniformity to be enacted, in the year 1662. This, you must remember, took place at the beginning of Charles the Second's reign, and shortly after the re-establishment of the Monarchy and the Church.

This famous act imposed terms and conditions of holding office on all ministers of the Church of England which had never been imposed before, from the time of the Reformation. It was notoriously so framed as to be offensive to the consciences of the Puritans, and to drive them out of the Church. For this purpose it was entirely successful. Within a year no less than 2000 clergymen resigned their livings rather than accept its terms. Many of these 2000 were the best, the ablest, and the holiest ministers of the day. Many a man, who had been regularly ordained by bishops, and spent twenty or thirty years in the service of the Church without molestation, was suddenly commanded to accept new conditions of holding pre-

ferment, and turned out to starve because he refused. Sixty of the leading parishes in London were at once deprived of their ministers, and their congregations left like sheep without a shepherd. Taking all things into consideration, a more impolitic and disgraceful deed never disfigured the annals of a Protestant Church.

It was a disgraceful deed, because it was a flat contradiction to Charles the Second's own promise at Breda, before he came back from exile. He was brought back on the distinct understanding that the Church of England should be re-established on such a broad and liberal basis as to satisfy the conscientious scruples of the Puritans. Had it not been for the assistance of the Puritans he would never have got back at all. And yet as soon as the reins of power were fairly in the king's hands, his promise was deliberately broken.

It was a disgraceful deed, because the great majority of the ejected ministers might easily have been retained in the Church by a few small concessions. They had no abstract objection to episcopacy, or to a liturgy. A few alterations in the prayers, and a moderate liberty in the conduct of divine worship, according to Baxter's calculation, would have satisfied 1600 out of the 2000. But the ruling party were determined not to make a single concession. They had no wish to keep the Puritans in. When some

one observed to Archbishop Sheldon, the chief mover in the business, that he thought many of the Puritans would conform, and accept the Act of Uniformity, the Archbishop replied, "I am afraid they will." To show the spirit of the ruling party in the Church, they actually added to the number of apocryphal lessons in the Prayer-book calendar at this time. They made it a matter of congratulation among themselves that they had thrust out the Puritans, and got in Bel and the Dragon!

It was a disgraceful deed, because the ejected ministers were, many of them, men of such ability and attainments, that great concessions ought to have been made in order to retain them in the Church. Baxter, Poole, Manton, Bates, Calamy, Brooks, Watson, Charnock, Caryl, Howe, Flavel, Bridge, Jenkyn, Owen, Goodwin, are names whose praise is even now in all the Churches. The men who turned them out were not to be compared to them. The names of the vast majority of them are hardly known. But they had power on their side, and they were resolved to use it.

It was a disgraceful deed, because it showed the world that the leaders of the Church of England, like the Bourbons in modern times, had learned nothing and forgotten nothing during their exile. They had not forgotten the old bad ways of Laud, which had brought such misery on England. They had not learned that conciliation and concession are the most

becoming graces in the rulers of a Church, and that persecution in the long run is sure to be a losing game.

I dare not dwell longer on this point. I might easily bring forward more illustrations of this sad feature in Baxter's times. I might speak of the infamous Oxford Act, in 1663, which forbade the unhappy ejected ministers to live within five miles of any corporate town, or of any place where they had formerly preached. But enough has been said to show you that when I spoke of the suicidal blindness of the Church of England, I did not speak without cause. The consequences of this blindness are manifest to any one who knows England. The divided state of Protestantism in this country is of itself a great fact, which speaks volumes.

Against the policy of the ruling party in the Church of England, under the Stewarts, I always shall protest. I do not feel the scruples which Baxter and his ejected brethren felt about the Act of Uniformity. Much as I respect them, I think them wrong and misguided in their judgments. But I think that Archbishop Sheldon, and the men who refused to go one step to meet them, were far more wrong and far more misguided. I believe they did an injury to the cause of true religion in England, which will probably never be repaired, by sowing the seeds of endless divisions. They were the men who laid the foundation of English dissent. I believe they recklessly

threw away a golden opportunity of doing good. They might easily have made my own beloved Church far more effective and far more useful than she ever has been by wise and timely concessions. They refused to do this, and, instead of a healing measure, brought forward their unhappy Act of Uniformity. I disavow any sympathy with their proceedings, and can never think of them without the deepest regret.

I cannot leave the subject of Baxter's times without offering one piece of counsel to my readers. I advise you, then, not to believe everything you may happen to read on the subject of the times of the Stewarts. There are no times, perhaps, about which prejudice and party-spirit have so warped the judgment and jaundiced the eye-sight of historians. If any one wants a really fair and impartial history of the times, I strongly advise him to read Marsden's "History of the Puritans." I regard these two volumes as the most valuable addition which has been made to our stock of religious history in modern times.

CHAPTER XI.

BAXTER'S LIFE.

BORN IN SHROPSHIRE IN 1615—ORDAINED BY BISHOP OF WORCESTER IN 1637—MINISTERS AT DUDLEY, BRIDGNORTH, AND KIDDERMINSTER—RETIRES TO LONDON IN 1660—EJECTED IN 1662—DIES IN 1691—HIS HOLINESS, PREACHING POWER, PASTORAL GIFTS, DILIGENCE IN THEOLOGICAL WRITING, PATIENCE IN SUFFERING—ENGLAND'S DEBT TO THE PURITANS—DESCRIPTION OF BAXTER'S LAST DAYS.

I NOW turn from Baxter's times to Baxter himself. Without some knowledge of the times, we can hardly understand the character and conduct of the man. A few plain facts about the man will be more likely than anything I can write to fasten in our minds the times.

Richard Baxter was the son of a small landed proprietor of Eaton Constantine, in Shropshire, and was born, in 1615, at Rowton, in the same county, where Mr. Adeney, his mother's father, resided.

He seems to have been under religious impressions from a very early period of his life, and for this, under God, he was indebted to the training of a pious father. Shropshire was a very dark, ungodly county in those days. The ministers were generally ignorant, graceless, and unable to preach ; and the people, as might

be expected, were profligate, and despisers of them that were good. In Eaton Constantine, the parishioners spent the greater part of the Lord's day in dancing round a Maypole near old Mr. Baxter's door, to his great distress and annoyance. Yet even here grace triumphed over the world in the case of his son, and he was added to the noble host of those who "serve the Lord from their youth."

It is always interesting to observe the names of religious books, which God is pleased to use in bringing souls to the knowledge of Himself. The books which had the most effect on Baxter were, Bunney's "Resolution;" Perkins "On Repentance, on Living and Dying well, and on the Government of the Tongue;" Culverwell "On Faith;" and Sibbs's "Bruised Reed." Disease and the prospect of death did much to carry on the spiritual work within him. He says in his Autobiography, "Weakness and pain helped me to study how to die. That set me on studying how to live, and that on studying the doctrines from which I must fetch my motives and my comforts."

At the age of twenty-two he was ordained a clergyman, by Thornborough, bishop of Worcester. He had never had the advantage of an University education. A free-school at Wroxeter, and a private tutor at Ludlow, had done something for him; and his own insatiable love of study had done a good deal more.

He, probably, entered the ministry far better furnished with theological learning than most young men of his day. He certainly entered it with qualifications far better than a knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. He entered it truly moved by the Holy Ghost, and a converted man. He says himself, "I knew that the want of academical honours and degrees were like to make me contemptible with the most. But yet, expecting to be so quickly in another world, the great concernment of miserable souls did prevail with me against all impediments. And being conscious of a thirsty desire of men's conscience and salvation, I resolved, that if one or two souls only might be won to God, it would easily recompense all the dishonour which, for want of titles, I might undergo from men."

From the time of his ordination to his death, Baxter's life was a constant series of strange vicissitudes, and intense physical and mental exertions. Sometimes in prosperity and sometimes in adversity,—sometimes praised and sometimes persecuted,—at one period catechising in the lanes of Kidderminster, at another disputing with bishops in the Savoy Conference,—one year writing the "Saint's Rest," at the point of death, in a quiet country house, another year a marching chaplain to a regiment in Cromwell's army,—one day offered a bishopric by Charles II., another cast out of the Church by the Act of Uniformity,—one year arguing for monarchy with Cromwell,

and telling him it was a blessing, another tried before Jeffreys on a charge of seditious writing,—one time living quietly at Acton in the society of Judge Hale, at another languishing in prison under some atrocious ecclesiastical persecution,—one day having public discussions about infant-baptism, with Mr. Tombes, in Bewdley Church, another holding the reading-desk of Amersham Church from morning to night against the theological arguments of Antinomian dragoons in the gallery,—sometimes preaching the plainest doctrines, sometimes handling the most abstruse metaphysical points,—sometimes writing folia for the learned, sometimes writing broad-sheets for the poor,—never, perhaps, did any Christian minister fill so many various positions ; and never, certainly, did any one come out of them all with such an unblemished reputation. Always suffering under incurable disease, and seldom long out of pain,—always working his mind to the uttermost, and never idle for a day,—seemingly overwhelmed with business, and yet never refusing new work,—living in the midst of the most exciting scenes, and yet holding daily converse with God,—not sufficiently a partisan to satisfy any side, and yet feared and courted by all,—too much of a Royalist to please the Parliamentary party, and yet too much connected with the Parliament and too holy to be popular with the Cavaliers,—too much of an Episcopalian to satisfy the violent portion of the Puritan body, and too much

of a Puritan to be trusted by the bishops : never, probably, did Christian man enjoy so little rest, though serving God with a pure conscience, as did Richard Baxter.

In 1638 he began his ministry, by preaching in the Upper Church at Dudley. There he continued a year. From Dudley he removed to Bridgnorth. There he continued a year and three-quarters. From Bridgnorth he removed to Kidderminster. From thence, after two years, he retired to Coventry, at the beginning of the Commonwealth troubles, and awaited the progress of the civil war. From Coventry, after the battle of Naseby, he joined the Parliamentary army in the capacity of Regimental Chaplain. He took this office in the vain hope that he might do some good among the soldiers, and counteract the ambitious designs of Cromwell and his friends. He was obliged by illness to give up his chaplaincy in 1646, and lingered for some months between life and death at the hospitable houses of Sir John Coke of Melbourne, in Derbyshire, and Sir Thomas Rous of Rouslench, in Worcestershire. At the end of 1646 he returned to Kidderminster, and there continued labouring indefatigably as parish Minister for fourteen years. In 1660 he left Kidderminster for London, and took an active part in promoting the restoration of Charles II., and was made one of the King's Chaplains. In London, he preached successively at St. Dunstan's, Black

Friars', and St. Bride's. Shortly after this he was offered the Bishopric of Hereford, but thought fit to refuse it. In 1662, he was one of the 2000 ministers who were turned out of the Church by the Act of Uniformity. Immediately after his ejection he married a wife who seems to have been every way worthy of him, and who was spared to be his loving and faithful companion for nineteen years. Her name was Margaret Charlton, of Apley Castle, in Shropshire. After this he lived in various places in and about London,—at Acton, Totteridge, Bloomsbury, and at last in Charterhouse Square. The disgraceful treatment of his enemies made it almost impossible for him to have any certain dwelling-place. Once, at this period of his life, he was offered a Scotch Bishopric, or the Mastership of a Scotch University, but declined both offices. With few exceptions, the last twenty-nine years of his life were embittered by repeated prosecutions, fines, imprisonment, and harassing controversies. When he could he preached, and when he could not preach he wrote books ; but something he was always doing. The revolution and accession of William III. brought him some little respite from persecution, and death at last removed the good old man to that place "where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest," in the year 1691, and the seventy-sixth year of his age.

Such is a brief outline of the life of one of the most

distinguished Puritans who lived under the Stewarts, and one of the most devoted ministers of the Gospel this country has ever seen. It is an outline which, we may readily believe, might be filled up to an indefinite length. I cannot, of course, pretend to do more than direct attention to a few leading particulars. If I do not tell more, it is not from want of matter. But if any one wishes to know why Baxter's name stands so high as it does in the list of English worthies, I ask him to give me his attention for a few minutes, and I will soon show him cause.

For one thing, Baxter was a man of most *eminent personal holiness*. Few men have ever lived before the eyes of the world for fifty or sixty years, as he did, and left so fair and unblemished a reputation. Bitterly and cruelly as many hated him, they could find no fault in the man, except as concerning the law of his God. He seems to have been holy in all the relations of life, and in all the circumstances in which man can be placed : holy as a son, a husband, a minister, and a friend,—holy in prosperity and in adversity, in sickness and in health, in youth and in old age. It is a fine saying of Orme, in his admirable life of him, that he was, in the highest sense, a most “unearthly” man. He lived with God, and Christ, and heaven, and death, and judgment, and eternity, continually before his eyes. He cared nothing for the good things of this world : a bishopric, with

all its emoluments and honours, had no charms for him. He cared nothing for the enmity of the world: no fear of man's displeasure ever turned him an inch out of his way. He was singularly independent of man's praise or blame. He could be bold as a lion in the presence of Cromwell, or Charles II., and his bishops; and yet he could be gentle as a lamb with poor people seeking how to be saved. He could be zealous as a Crusader for the rights of conscience, and yet he was of so catholic a spirit that he loved all who loved Jesus Christ in sincerity. "Be it by Conformists or by Nonconformists," he would say, "I rejoice that Christ is preached." He was a truly humble man. To one who wrote to him expressing admiration for his character, he replied, "You admire one you do not know: knowledge would cure your error." So fair an epistle of Christ, considering the amazing trials of patience he had to go through, this country has seldom seen as Richard Baxter. Let us remember this point in Baxter's character. No argument has such lasting power with the world as a holy and consistent life. Let us remember that this holiness was attained by a man of like passions with ourselves. Let Baxter be an encouragement and an example. Let us remember the Lord God of Baxter is not changed.

For another thing, Baxter was *one of the most powerful preachers that ever addressed an English congregation*. He seems to have possessed all the gifts

which are generally considered to make a perfect “master of assemblies.” He had an amazing fluency,—an enormous store of matter,—a most clear and lucid style,—an unlimited command of forcible language,—a pithy, pointed, emphatic way of presenting truth,—a singularly moving and pathetic voice,—and an earnestness of manner which swept everything before it like a torrent. He used to say, “It must be serious preaching which will make men serious in hearing and obeying it.” Two well-known lines of his show you the man :

“I’ll preach as though I ne’er should preach again,
And as a dying man to dying men.”

Dr. Bates, a cotemporary, says of him, “He had a marvellous felicity and copiousness in speaking. There was a noble negligence in his style. His great mind could not stoop to the affected eloquence of words. He despised flashy oratory. But his expressions were so clear and powerful, so convincing to the understanding, so entering into the soul, so engaging the affections, that those were as deaf as an adder who were not charmed by so wise a charmer.”

The effects that his preaching produced were those which such preaching always has produced and always will. As it was under the pulpit of Latimer and Whitfield, so it was under the pulpit of Baxter. At Dudley, the poor nailers would not only crowd the

church, but even hang upon the windows and the leads without. At Kidderminster, it became necessary to build five new galleries, in order to accommodate the congregation. In London, the crowds who attended his ministry were so large, that it was sometimes dangerous, and often impossible, to be one of his hearers.

Once, when he was about to preach at St. Lawrence, Jewry, he sent word to Mr. Vines the minister, that the Earl of Suffolk and Lord Broghill were coming in a coach with him, and would be glad to have seats. But when he and his noble companions reached the door, the crowd had so little respect for persons, that the two peers had to go home again because they could not get within hearing. Mr. Vines himself was obliged to get up into the pulpit, and sit behind the preacher, from want of room ; and Baxter actually preached standing between Mr. Vines's feet.

On another occasion, when he was preaching to an enormous crowd in St. Dunstan's, Fleet Street, he made a striking use of an incident which took place during the sermon. A piece of brick fell down in the steeple, and an alarm was raised that the church, an old and rotten building, was falling. Scarcely was the alarm allayed, when a bench, on which some people were standing, broke with their weight, and the confusion was worse than ever. Many crowded to the doors to get out, and all were in a state of panic. One

old woman was heard loudly asking God forgiveness for having come to the church at all, and promising, if she only got out safe, never to come there again. In the midst of all the confusion Baxter alone was calm and unmoved. As soon as order was restored, he rose and said, "We are in the service of God to prepare ourselves that we may be fearless at the great noise of the dissolving world, when the heavens shall pass away, and the elements melt with fervent heat." This was Baxter all over. This was the kind of thing he had not only grace, but gifts and nerve, to do. He always spoke like one who saw God, and felt death at his back. Such a man will seldom fail to preach well. Such a man will seldom be in want of hearers. Such a man deserves to be embalmed in the memory of all who want to know what God can do for a child of Adam by His Spirit. Such a man deserves to be praised.

For another thing, Baxter was *one of the most successful pastors of a parish and congregation that ever lived*. When he came to Kidderminster, he found it a dark, ignorant, immoral, irreligious place, containing, perhaps, 3000 inhabitants. When he left it at the end of fourteen years, he had completely turned the parish upside down. "The place before his coming," says Dr. Bates, "was like a piece of dry and barren earth: but, by the blessing of Heaven upon his labour, the face of Paradise appeared there. The bad were

changed to good, and the good to better." The number of his regular communicants averaged 600. "Of these," Baxter tells us, "there were not twelve of whom I had not good hope as to their sincerity." The Lord's Day was thoroughly revered and observed. It was said, "You might have heard an hundred families singing psalms and repeating sermons as you passed through the streets." When he came there, there was about one family in a street which worshipped God at home. When he went away, there were some streets in which there was not more than one family on a side that did not do it; and this was the case even with inns and public-houses. Even of the irreligious families, there were very few which had not some converted relations. "Some of the poor people became so well versed in theology, that they understood the whole body of divinity, and were able to judge difficult controversies. Some were so able in prayer, that few ministers could match them in order, fulness, apt expressions, holy oratory and fervour. Best of all, the temper of their minds and the innocency of their lives were much more laudable even than their gifts."

The grand instrument to which Baxter used to attribute this astounding success was his system of household visitation and regular private conference with his parishioners. No doubt this did immense good, and the more so because it was a new thing in

those days. Nevertheless, there is no denying the fact that the most elaborate parochial machinery of modern times has never produced such effects as those you have just heard of at Kidderminster. And the true account of this I believe to be, that no parish has ever had such a wonderful mainspring in the middle of it as Baxter was. While some divines were wrangling about the divine right of Episcopacy or Presbytery, or splitting hairs about reprobation and free-will, Baxter was always visiting from house to house, and beseeching men, for Christ's sake, to be reconciled to God and flee from the wrath to come. While others were entangling themselves in politics, and burying their dead amidst the potsherds of the earth, Baxter was living a crucified life and daily preaching the Gospel. I suspect he was the best and wisest pastor that an English parish has ever had, and a model that many of us would do well to follow. Once more I say, have I not a right to say such a polished instrument as this ought not to be allowed to rust in oblivion? Such a man as this deserves to be praised.

For another thing, Baxter was *one of the most diligent theological writers the world has ever seen*. Few have the slightest idea of the immense number of works in divinity which he wrote in the fifty years of his active life. It is reckoned that they would fill sixty octavo volumes, comprising not less than 35,000

closely-printed pages. These works, no doubt, are not all of equal merit, and many of them probably will never repay perusal. Like the ships from Tarshish, they contain not only gold, and silver, and ivory, but also a large quantity of apes and peacocks. Still, after every deduction, the writings of Baxter generally contain a great mass of solid truths, and truths often handled in a most striking and masterly way. Dr. Barrow, no mean judge, says, "That his practical writings were never mended, and his controversial ones seldom confuted." Bishop Wilkins declares, "That he had cultivated every subject he had handled, that if he had lived in the primitive times he would have been one of the Fathers of the Church, and that it was enough for one age to produce such a man as Mr. Baxter." That great and good man, William Wilberforce, says, "His practical writings are a treasury of Christian wisdom;" and he adds, "I must beg to class among the brightest ornaments of the Church of England this great man, who was so shamefully ejected from the Church in 1662."

No one man has certainly ever written three such books as Baxter's three master-pieces, "The Saint's Rest," "The Reformed Pastor," and "The Call to the Unconverted." I believe they have been made blessings to thousands of souls, and are alone sufficient to place the author in the foremost rank of theological writers. Of "The Call to the Unconverted," 20,000

were printed in one year. Six brothers were converted at one time by reading it. Eliot, the missionary, thought so highly of it, that he translated it into the Indian language, the first book after the Bible. And really, when we consider that all Baxter's writings were composed in the midst of intense labour and fierce persecution, and often under the pressure of heavy bodily disease, the wonder is not only that he wrote so much, but that so much of what he wrote should be so good. Such wonderful diligence and redemption of time the world has never seen. Once more I say, have I not a right to say such a man deserves to be praised?

For another thing, Baxter was *one of the most patient martyrs for conscience sake that England has ever seen*. Of course I do not mean that he was called upon to seal his faith with his blood, as our Protestant Reformers were. But there is such a thing as "wearing out the saints of the Most High," by persecutions and prisons, as well as shedding the blood of the saints. There is a "dying daily," which, to some natures, is worse even than dying at the stake. If anything tries faith and patience, I believe it to be the constant dropping of such wearing persecution as Baxter had to endure for nearly the last twenty-nine years of his life. He had robbed no one. He had murdered no one. He had injured no one. He held no heresy. He believed all the Articles of the Christian faith.

And yet no thief or felon in the present day was ever so shamefully treated as this good man. To tell you how often he was summoned, fined, silenced, imprisoned, driven from one place to another, would be an endless task. To describe all the hideous perversions of justice to which he was subjected would be both painful and unprofitable. I will only allow myself to give one instance, and that shall be his trial before Chief-Justice Jeffreys.

Baxter was tried before Jeffreys in 1685, at Westminster Hall, on a charge of having published seditious matter, reflecting on the Bishops, in a paraphrase on the New Testament, which he had recently brought out. A more unfounded charge could not have been made. The book is still extant, and any one will see at a glance that the alleged seditious passages do not prove the case. Fox, in his history of James II.'s reign, tells us plainly, "that the real motive for bringing him to trial was the desire of punishing an eminent dissenting teacher, whose reputation was high among his sect, and who was supposed to favour the political opinions of the Whigs."

A long and graphic account of the trial was drawn up by a bystander, and it gives so vivid a picture of the administration of justice in Baxter's days that it may be useful to give a few short extracts from it.

From the very opening of the trial it was clear which way the verdict was intended to go. The Lord

Chief Justice of England behaved as if he were counsel for the prosecution and not judge. He condescended to use abusive language towards the defendant, such as was more suited to Billingsgate than a court of law. One after another the counsel for the defence were browbeaten, silenced, and put down, or else interrupted by violent invectives against Baxter.

At one time the Lord Chief Justice exclaimed: "This is an old rogue, who hath poisoned the world with his Kidderminster doctrine. He encouraged all the woman and maids to bring their bodkins and thimbles to carry on war against the King of ever blessed memory. An old schismatical knave! A hypocritical villain!"

By-and-by he called Baxter "an old blockhead, an unthankful villain, a conceited, stubborn, fanatical dog. Hang him!" he said, "this one old fellow hath cast more reproaches on the constitution and discipline of our Church than will be wiped off for this hundred years. But I'll handle him for it, for he deserves to be whipped through the city."

Shortly afterwards, when Baxter began to say a few words on his own behalf, Jeffreys stopped him, crying out, "Richard, Richard, dost thou think we'll hear thee poison the Court? Richard, thou art an old fellow, an old knave; thou hast written books enough to load a cart, every one as full of sedition, I might say

treason, as an egg is full of meat. Hadst thou been whipped out of thy writing trade forty years ago, it had been happy. Thou pretendest to be a preacher of the Gospel of peace, and thou hast one foot in the grave: it is time for thee to think what kind of an account thou intendest to give. But leave thee to thyself and I see thou wilt go on as thou hast begun; but, by the grace of God, I will look after thee. I know thou hast a mighty party, and I see a great many of the brotherhood in corners, waiting to see what will become of this mighty dove; but, by the grace of God Almighty, I'll crush you all! Come, what do you say for yourself, you old knave? Come, speak up!"

All this, and much more of the same kind, and even worse, went on at Baxter's trial. The extracts I have given form but a small portion of the whole account.

It is needless to say, that in such a court as this Baxter was at once found guilty. He was fined five hundred marks, which it was known he could not pay; condemned to lie in prison till he paid it, and bound over to good behaviour for seven years. And the issue of the matter was, that this poor, old, diseased, childless widower, of threescore years and ten, lay for two years in Southwark gaol!

It is needless, I hope, to remark in the nineteenth century that such a trial as this was a disgrace to the judicial bench of England, and a still greater dis-

grace to those persons with whom the information originated, understood commonly to have been Sherlock and L'Estrange. Thank God! I trust England, at any rate, has bid a long farewell to such trials as these, whatever may be done in other lands! Wretched, indeed, is that country where low, sneaking informers are encouraged;—where the terrors of the law are directed more against holiness, and Scriptural religion, and freedom of thought, than against vice and immorality;—and where the seat of justice is used for the advancement of political purposes, or the gratification of petty ecclesiastical spite!

But it is right that we should know that under all this foul injustice and persecution, Baxter's grace and patience never failed him. "These things," he said, in Westminster Hall, "will surely be understood one day, what fools one sort of Protestants are made to prosecute the other." When he was reviled, he reviled not again. He returned blessing for cursing, and prayer for ill-usage. Few martyrs have ever glorified God so much in their one day's fire as Richard Baxter did for twenty years under the ill-usage of so-called Protestants! Once more, I say, have I not a right to tell you such a man as this deserves to be remembered?

Such a man surely deserves to be praised.

And now I hope I have proved my case. I trust it will be allowed that there are men who lived in times long gone by whose character it is useful to

review, and that Baxter is undeniably one of them : a real man—a true spiritual hero.

I do not ask men to regard him as a perfect and faultless being, any more than Cranmer or Calvin or Knox or Wesley. I do not at all defend some of Baxter's doctrinal statements. He tried to systematise things which cannot be systematised, and he failed. You will not find such a clear, full gospel in his writings as in those of Owen, and Bridge, and Traill. I do not think he was always right in his judgment. I regard his refusal of a bishopric as a huge mistake. By that refusal he rejected a glorious opportunity of doing good. Had Baxter been on the episcopal bench, and in the House of Lords, I do not believe the Act of Uniformity would ever have passed.

But in a world like this we must take true Christians as they are, and be thankful for what they are. It is not given to mortal man to be faultless. Take Baxter for all together, and there are few English ministers of the Gospel whose names deserve to stand higher than his. Some have excelled him in some gifts, and some in others. But it is seldom that so many gifts are to be found united in one man as they are in Baxter. Eminent personal holiness,—amazing power as a preacher,—unrivalled pastoral skill,—indefatigable diligence as a writer,—meekness and patience under undeserved persecution,—all meet together in the character of this one man. Let us place him high in

our list of great and good men. Let us give him the honour he deserves. It is no small thing to be the fellow-countryman of Richard Baxter.

And here let me remark that few bodies of men are under greater obligation to Baxter and his friends than the members of voluntary religious societies in the present day.

We are allowed to associate together upon Evangelical principles and for religious ends, and no one hinders us. We are allowed to meet in large numbers, and take sweet counsel with one another, and strengthen one another's hands in the service of Christ, and no one interferes to prevent us. We are allowed to assemble for devotional purposes, to read the Word of God, and stir one another up to perseverance in the faith, and no one dares to prohibit us. How great are all these privileges! How incalculable the benefit of union, conference, sympathy, and encouragement to Christians who are voyaging over the stormy waters of this evil world, and trying to do good. Blessed is the labour of those by whose care and attention these societies are kept together! They are sowing precious seed. They may sow with much toil and discouragement, but they may be sure they are sowing seed which shall yet bear fruit after many days.

But never let us forget to whom we are indebted for all this liberty of conference and association which we enjoy. Never let us forget that there was a time

when informers would have tracked all our steps—when constables and soldiers would have rudely broken up our gatherings at Exeter Hall, and when our proceedings would have entailed upon us pains, penalties, fines, and imprisonments. Never let us forget that the happy and profitable freedom which we enjoy was only won by long-continued and intense struggles, by the blood and sufferings of noble-minded men, of whom the world was not worthy; and never forget that the men who won this freedom for us were those much-abused men—the Puritans.

Yes: we all owe a debt to the Puritans, which I trust we shall never refuse to acknowledge. We live in days when many are disposed to run them down. As we travel through life, we often hear them derided and abused as seditious, rebellious levellers in the things of Cæsar, and ignorant, fanatical, hypocritical enthusiasts in the things of God. We often hear some semi-popish stripling fresh from Oxford, puffed up with new-fledged views of what he calls “apostolical succession,” and proud of a little official authority, depreciating and sneering at the Puritans, as men alike destitute of learning and true religion, while, in reality, he is scarcely worthy to sit at their feet and carry their books. To all such calumnies and false statements, I trust we shall never give heed.

Let us settle it down in our minds that for sound doctrine, spirituality, and learning combined, the Puri-

tans stand at the head of English divines. With all their faults, weaknesses, and defects, they alone kept the lamp of pure, evangelical religion burning in this country in the times of the Stewarts,—they alone prevented Laud's popish inclinations carrying England back into the arms of Rome. It was they who fought the battle of religious freedom, of which we are reaping such fruits. It was they who crushed the wretched spirit of inquisitorial persecution which misguided high-Churchmen tried to introduce into this land. Let us give them the honour they deserve. Let us suffer no man to speak lightly of them in our presence. Let us remember our obligations to them, reverence their memory, stand up boldly for their reputation, and never be afraid to plead their cause. It is the cause of pure, evangelical religion. It is the cause of an open Bible and liberty to meet and read and pray together. It is the cause of liberty of conscience. All these are bound up with Baxter and the Puritans. Let us remember this, and give them their due.

Baxter's last days were almost as remarkable as any in his life. He went down to his grave as calmly and peacefully as the setting sun in summer. His deathbed was a glorious deathbed indeed.

I like to know how great men die. I am not satisfied with knowing that men are great Christians in the plenitude of riches and honour. I want to know

whether they were great in view of the tomb. I do not want merely to know how men meet kings and bishops and parliaments ; I want to know how they meet the king of terrors, and how they feel in the prospect of standing before the King of kings. I suspect that greatness which forsakes a man at last. I like to know how great men die, and I must be allowed to dwell for a few moments upon Baxter's death.

Few deathbeds, perhaps, were ever more truly instructive than that of this good old Puritan. His friend, Dr. Bates, has given a full description of it, and I think a few facts drawn from it may prove a suitable conclusion to this biography.

Baxter's last illness found him quietly living in Charterhouse Square, close to the meeting-house of his friend, Dr. Sylvester. Here for the four years preceding his death, he was allowed to enjoy great quietness. The liberty of preaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, no man forbidding him, was at length fully conceded. "Here," says Dr. Calamy, "he used to preach with great freedom about another world, like one that had been there, and was come as a sort of express to make a report of it." The storm of persecution was at length over. The winds and waves that had so long burst over him were at last lulled. The saintly old Puritan was mercifully allowed to go down to the banks of Jordan in a great calm.

He continued to preach so long, notwithstanding

his wasted body, that the last time he almost died in the pulpit. When disease compelled him to give over his beloved work, and take to his dying bed, it found him the same man that he had been for fifty years. His last hours were spent in preparing others and himself to meet God. He said to the friends who visited him, "You come hither to learn to die. I am not the only person that must go this way. Have a care of this vain, deceitful world, and the lust of the flesh. Be sure you choose God for your portion, heaven for your home, God's glory for your end, God's word for your rule, and then you need never fear but we shall meet again with comfort."

Never was penitent sinner more humble, and never was sincere believer more calm and comfortable. He said, "God may justly condemn me for the best duty I ever did; and all my hopes are from the free mercy of God in Christ." He had often said before, "I can more readily believe that God will forgive me, than I can forgive myself."

After a slumber, he waked, saying, "I shall rest from my labours." A minister present said, "And your works will follow you." He replied, "No works; I will leave out works, if God will grant me the other." When a friend comforted him with the remembrance of the good many had received from his writings, he replied, "I was but a pen in God's hand, and what praise is due to a pen?"

When extremity of pain made him long for death, he would check himself and say, "It is not fit for me to prescribe : when Thou wilt—what Thou wilt—how Thou wilt!" Being in great anguish, he said, "How unsearchable are His ways!" and then he said to his friends, "Do not think the worse of religion for what you see me suffer."

Being often asked by his friend how it was with his inward man, he replied, "I have a well-grounded assurance of my eternal happiness, and great peace and comfort within ; but it is my trouble that I cannot triumphantly express it, by reason of extreme pain." He added "Flesh must perish, and we must feel the perishing ; and though my judgment submit, sense will make me groan."

Being asked by a nobleman whether he had great joy from his believing apprehension of the invisible state, he replied, "What else, think you, Christianity serves for?" And then he added, "that the consideration of the Deity, in His glory and greatness, was too high for our thoughts ; but the consideration of the Son of God in our nature, and of the saints in heaven whom we knew and loved, did much sweeten and familiarise heaven to him." The description of heaven in the 12th chapter of Hebrews, beginning with the "innumerable company of angels," and ending with "Jesus the Mediator, and the blood of sprinkling," was very comfortable to him. "That scripture," he

said, "deserves a thousand thousand thoughts!" And then he added, "Oh, how comfortable is that promise, 'Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things God hath laid up for them that love Him!'"

At another time he said, that "he found great comfort and sweetness in repeating the words of the Lord's Prayer, and was sorry that some good men were prejudiced against the use of it; for there were all necessary petitions for soul and body contained in it."

He gave excellent counsel to young ministers who visited him on his deathbed. He used to pray earnestly "that God would bless their labours, and make them very successful in converting many souls to Christ." He expressed great joy in the hope that God would do a great deal of good by them, and that they would be of moderate, peaceful spirits.

He did not forget the world he was leaving. He frequently prayed "that God would be merciful to this miserable, distracted world; and that He would persevere His Church and interest in it."

He advised his friends "to beware of self-conceit-ness, as a sin likely to ruin this nation." Being asked at the same time whether he had altered his mind in controversial points, he replied, "Those that please may know my mind in my writings. What I have done was not for my own reputation, but the glory of God."

The day before he died, Dr. Bates visited him ; and on his saying some words of comfort, he replied, " I have pain : there is no arguing against sense ; but I have peace : I have peace ! " Bates told him he was going to his long-desired home. He answered, " I believe : I believe ! " He expressed great willingness to die. During his sickness, when the question was asked how he did, his reply was, " Almost well ! " or else, " Better than I deserve to be, but not so well as I hope to be. " His last words were addressed to Dr. Sylvester, " The Lord teach you how to die ! "

On Tuesday, the 8th of December, 1691, Baxter's warfare was accomplished ; and at length he entered what he had so beautifully described,—*" the saint's everlasting rest."*

He was buried at Christchurch, amidst the tears of many who knew his worth, if the world and the Established Church of that day did not. The funeral was that kind of funeral which is above all in real honour : *" devout men carried him to his grave, and made great lamentation over him."*

He left no family, but he left behind him hundreds of spiritual sons and daughters. He left works which are still owned by God in every part of the world to the awakening and edification of immortal souls. Thousands, I doubt not, will stand up in the morning of the resurrection, and thank God for the grace and gifts bestowed on the old Puritan of Shropshire. He

left a name which must always be dear to every lover of holiness, and every friend of religious liberty. No Englishman, perhaps, ever exemplified the one, or promoted the other, more truly and really than did Richard Baxter.

Let me conclude by quoting the last paragraph of Dr. Bates' funeral sermon on the occasion of Baxter's death: "Blessed be the gracious God, that He was pleased to prolong the life of His servant, so useful and beneficial to the world, to a full age, and that He brought him slowly and safely to heaven. I shall conclude this account with my own deliberate wish: May I live the short remainder of my life as entirely to the glory of God as he lived; and when I shall come to the period of my life, may I die in the same blessed peace wherein he died; may I be with him in the kingdom of light and love for ever."

WILLIAM GURNALL.

CHAPTER XII.

GURNALL'S EARLY LIFE AND EDUCATION.

GURNALL'S HISTORY VERY LITTLE KNOWN—REASON OF THIS—
BORN AT LYNN, 1616—EDUCATED AT LYNN GRAMMAR SCHOOL,
AND EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE—HISTORY OF EMMANUEL
COLLEGE—STATE OF FEELING AT CAMBRIDGE WHILE GURNALL
WAS THERE.

WILLIAM GURNALL, Rector of Lavenham, in Suffolk, and author of "The Christian in Complete Armour," is a man about whom the world possesses singularly little information. Perhaps there is no writer who has left a name so familiar to all readers of Puritan theology, but of whose personal history so little is known. Except the three facts, that he was a Puritan divine of the seventeenth century,—that he was Minister of Lavenham,—and that he wrote a well-known book of practical divinity, most persons know nothing of William Gurnall.

This dearth of information about so good a man appears at first sight extraordinary and unaccountable. Born, as he was, in a seaport town of no mean import-

ance,—the son of parents who held a prominent position in the town,—educated at Cambridge, at one of the best known Colleges of the day,—the cotemporary of leading divines of the Commonwealth times,—minister of the largest church in West Suffolk for the uninterrupted period of thirty-five years,—author of a work which, from its first appearance, was eminently popular,—Gurnall was a man, we naturally feel, of whom more ought to be known. How is it then that more is not known? How shall we account for the absence of any notice of him in the biographical writings of his day?

I believe that these questions admit of a very simple answer. That answer is to be found in the line of conduct which Gurnall followed in the year 1662, on the passing of the unhappy Act of Uniformity. *He did not secede from the Church of England!* He was not one of the famous two thousand ministers who gave up their preferment on St. Bartholomew's Day, and became Nonconformists. He retained his position, and continued Rector of Lavenham. Puritan as he undoubtedly was, both in doctrine and practice, he did not do what many of his brethren did. When Baxter, Manton, Owen, Goodwin, and a host of other giants in theology, seceded from the Church of England, Gurnall stood fast, and refused to move. He did not act with the party with which he had generally acted, and was left behind.

The result of this line of conduct can easily be imagined. Whatever opinions we may hold about Gurnall's conformity, we must all allow that the course he took was not likely to make him a favourite with either of the two great religious parties into which England at that time was divided. A neutral is never popular in a season of strife and controversy. Both sides suspect him. Each party is offended at him for not casting his weight into their scale. This, I suspect, was precisely Gurnall's position. He was a Puritan in doctrine, and yet he steadfastly adhered to the Church of England. He was a minister of the Church of England, and yet a thorough Puritan both in preaching and practice. In fact, he was just the man to be disliked and slighted by both sides.

I throw out the conjecture I have made with considerable diffidence. It is undoubtedly nothing but a conjecture. But I look at the broad fact that the biographical writers who have handled Gurnall's age, have chronicled scores of names of far less weight than his, and have refused to say a word about the author of "The Christian in Complete Armour." Calamy, Clarke, Neal, and Brooke have written hundreds of pages about men for whom the world cares nothing now, but not a page about Gurnall! I leave it to others to offer a better explanation of this fact, if they can. I must be allowed to retain my own settled conviction, that we should know far more about Gur-

nall if he had not submitted to the Act of Uniformity in 1662, and retained the pulpit of Lavenham parish church.

To supply a correct history of this good man and his times, is the object of the biography I am now writing. Ever since I read "*The Christian in Complete Armour*," I have felt that the author of such a book was a man whose life ought to be known. From the day that I was transplanted into the Eastern Counties, and became a Suffolk incumbent, I have made it my business to study the lives of eminent Suffolk divines. None of them all appears to deserve excavation from undeserved oblivion so much as Gurnall.

Almost the only source of information about Gurnall which we now possess is a small volume, published in 1830, by a writer named M'Keon, entitled, "*An Inquiry into the Birthplace, Parentage, Life, and Writings of the Rev. William Gurnall, formerly Rector of Lavenham, in Suffolk, and Author of 'The Christian in Complete Armour.'*" This book was printed and published for the author at Woodbridge, in Suffolk, and not in London. It is owing to this circumstance, perhaps, that it seems to have attracted little notice, and to have become comparatively unknown.

Mr. M'Keon was an inhabitant of Lavenham, and likely to procure information about Gurnall, if any one could. He was undoubtedly a painstaking man,

and an antiquarian of considerable research. His accuracy and correctness are worthy of all commendation. There is hardly a single date or fact in his book which I have not taken the trouble to verify by inquiry and investigation; and there is hardly one, I feel bound to say, in which I have found him wrong. But it cannot be said that his "Inquiry" is written in a popular and attractive style. In accumulating facts he was most successful; in arranging and exhibiting them to the reading public I certainly think he failed.

However, whatever may be the faults of Mr. M'Keon's book, it is certainly the only attempt at any account of Gurnall which has hitherto existed. A funeral sermon, to be sure, was preached by Gurnall's friend and neighbour, the well-known commentator Burkitt. But the information it contains is comparatively very small. I must therefore frankly avow that I am indebted to Mr. M'Keon's work for the greater part of the facts about Gurnall which I have brought together in the following pages. I have tried to re-arrange these facts. I have endeavoured to present them to the reader in an attractive form, by illustrating them with some cross lights from the history of Gurnall's times. I have added a few facts which Mr. M'Keon was probably unable to obtain. But I think it only fair to state that Mr. M'Keon's book is the principal mine from which the biographical account of Gurnall now presented to the reader has

been drawn. If I have added anything of interest to his work, it is almost always by following up clues which his volume indicated or put into my hand.

William Gurnall was born at Lynn, in the county of Norfolk, in the year 1616, and was baptized at St. Margaret's church in that town, on the 17th of November, 1616. His father and mother were married at St. Margaret's church on the 31st of December, 1615, and the subject of this memoir was therefore their eldest child.^a

It has often been observed that the mothers of great men, and especially of great divines, have been remarkable for strong mind and force of intellect. Mothers have been found, as a general rule, to influence children's character far more than fathers. How far this was true in the case of Gurnall we have unfortunately no means of judging. We only know that his mother's maiden name was Catherine Dressit, and that in all probability she was a native of Lynn.

Gregory, the father of William Gurnall, appears to

^a Mr. Hankinson, once Rector of St. Margaret's, Lynn, informed me that the name "Gurnall," to the best of his knowledge, is no longer known in Lynn. But he says that the name "Gurling" is not uncommon, and that he has little doubt it was originally "Gurnal." He adds, "I find an entry of baptism in 1799, where the name is 'Gurnell or Gurling.'" In Suffolk, the names of "Girling" and "Grinling," as I happen to know from the parish register of Stradbroke, are very common.

have been one of the principal inhabitants of Lynn. At any rate he was an Alderman of his native town in the year when his son was born, and was Mayor of the borough eight years afterwards, in 1624. Nothing is known of his calling or occupation. The fact that his son died possessed of certain landed property at Walpole, a country parish not far from Lynn, makes it highly probable that Gregory Gurnall was a landed proprietor. But on this point nothing certain is known.

Gurnall had the misfortune to lose his father when he was only fifteen years old. His death is recorded in the register of St. Margaret's, Lynn, as having taken place on the 14th of October, 1631. He was buried in St. Margaret's church, and a tomb was erected to his memory, with a curious inscription. This tomb is no longer extant, as the spire of St. Margaret's church was blown down in a violent hurricane in the year 1741, and falling on the body of the church destroyed a large portion of the building. Mackerell's History of Lynn, published about four years before the hurricane, records the inscription. If epitaphs were worth anything, the language of Gregory Gurnall's epitaph might lead us to the conclusion that he was a godly man. But unhappily it is too well known that tombstones are not always to be trusted.

How long Gurnall's mother survived his father there is no evidence to show. M'Keon conjectures that she

married again. It is certainly a curious fact that Burkitt, the commentator, in his funeral sermon on William Gurnall, uses the following language: "How great was that tribute of veneration and respect which he constantly paid to the hoary hairs of his aged parents." Considering that his father died when he was only fifteen years old, these words can hardly be supposed to apply to Gregory Gurnall. Unless therefore the word "parents" in Burkitt's sermon is a printer's mistake for "parent," it seems a very probable idea that Gurnall's mother married again, and that he had a kind and loving stepfather. But who he was, and how long his mother lived, we do not know.

The first fifteen years of Gurnall's life appear to have been spent in his native town of Lynn. There is at any rate no doubt that he was educated at the Free Grammar School of that town up to the time when he went to Cambridge. The fact is recorded in the books of the school.

The first fifteen years of life have often so much weight in the formation of a man's character, that it would be very interesting to find out the influences under which William Gurnall spent his early years. Unhappily we possess no materials for doing this. Ambrose Fish was appointed Master of Lynn Grammar School in 1626, in the place of Mr. Robinson, deceased, and Robert Woodmansea was appointed

Master in 1627. But we know nothing of these men. I can only point out two things which appear to me deserving of attention.

For one thing, we may probably trace up to Lynn, Gurnall's Puritan predilections and opinions. Lynn was one of the chief towns of the most thoroughly Protestant district in England in the seventeenth century. In the days of Queen Mary and Elizabeth the inhabitants of Norfolk and Suffolk were famous for their deep attachment to the doctrines of the Reformation. In the days of the Stuarts and the Commonwealth, they were no less famous for their steadfast adherence to Puritan principles. In no part of England were High Church opinions so thoroughly disliked as in the diocese of Norwich, and in no diocese were the minds of people so continually exasperated by vexatious persecutions of Nonconformists.^b Brought up in a large market town like Lynn, we cannot doubt that the religious atmosphere in which young Gurnall moved was essentially Puritan. If, as it seems not unlikely, from a comparison of dates, the famous John Arrowsmith and Samuel Fairclough were Ministers at Lynn during Gurnall's school days, we get an additional ray of light thrown on the

^b Harsnet, White, Corbet, Wren, and Montague were Bishops of Norwich between 1619 and 1641. Three of them, at least, viz., Harsnet, Wren, and Montague, were notoriously very High Churchmen, and strongly opposed to the Puritans.

source of his doctrinal opinions. To hear men like Arrowsmith and Fairclough preach every Sunday, and perhaps to be solemnly catechised or examined by Arrowsmith on stated public occasions, were just the things likely to produce an indelible impression on a mind like Gurnall's.^c

^c John Arrowsmith was born at Gateshead, in 1602. He was educated at St. John's College, Cambridge, and was chosen Fellow of Katherine Hall. He was elected one of the University Preachers, was beneficed at Lynn, and was afterwards Preacher at St. Margaret's, Ironmonger's Lane, London. He was a leading member of the Westminster Assembly, and had a principal share in drawing up the Assembly's Catechism. He was elected Master of St. John's College in 1644, and was chosen Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge in 1647. In 1651 he was appointed Regius Professor of Divinity, and Rector of Somersham. He was chosen Master of Trinity College in 1653, died in 1659, and was buried in Trinity College Chapel. His commentary on the first seventeen verses of the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, entitled "God-Man," gives a very favourable impression of his ability.

Samuel Fairclough was born at Haverhill in 1594, and was educated at Queen's College, Cambridge. He was appointed Lecturer at Lynn by the Mayor and Aldermen in 1619, and continued there, according to Samuel Clarke, who gives a long and most interesting account of him, "for some time." The opposition and persecution of Harsnet, Bishop of Norwich, obliged him to resign this lecture. He was afterwards Lecturer at Clare, in Suffolk, and was then appointed Rector of Keddington, by Sir N. Barnardiston. He resigned this living in 1662, on account of the Act of Uniformity. He died in retirement in 1677, aged 84. Though a retiring man, and not known by any writings, he seems to have been a man of singular gifts and graces. There is an interesting tablet in Heveningham Church, erected by his daughter, wife of Mr. Jones, Rector of Heveningham. He lived at Heveningham for two years, but died at Stowmarket.

For another thing, we probably owe to Gurnall's early residence at Lynn his remarkable familiarity with the sea, sailors, and shipping. I was once puzzled to make out the reason why nautical illustrations so frequently occur in his writings. It did not surprise me to find an author like Gurnall, who delighted in illustrations, pressing everything in town and country into his service. I could understand the man who was Rector of a Suffolk town for thirty-five years, drawing comparisons from shops, and farms, and streets, and fields, and horses, and cattle, and corn, and grass and flowers. I could understand the minister who lived through the bloody wars of the Commonwealth times, using abundant imagery from the habits of soldiers and from the battle-field. But I never could understand Gurnall's familiarity with the sea and shipping, until I found out that he was born and bred in Lynn. He knew well what a sailor's life was. He had seen the quaint-looking craft which carried on the coasting trade of Lynn. He had doubtless talked with sailors who could tell the perils of "the Wash," the Lincolnshire coast, the Norfolk Sands, and the voyage to the Humber. Hence came his nautical illustrations in Lavenham pulpit. How true it is that all knowledge is useful to a minister of Christ. The man of God makes everything he has seen become serviceable to his Master's cause.

The next thing that we know about Gurnall is his

connection with Cambridge as a pensioner of Emmanuel College. It appears that Lynn Corporation had two Scholarships at Emmanuel in its gift, connected with the Grammar School of the town. To one of these Gurnall was presented by the Corporation, in December, 1631, not long after his father's death. A correspondent of M'Keon, at Lynn, says: "I find, on reference to the Corporation books, that on the 2nd December, 1631, William Gurnall, son of Gregory Gurnall, alderman there, lately deceased, and one of the scholars of Lynn School, was nominated to one of the Scholarships in Emmanuel College, Cambridge, called Lynn Scholarship, or Mr. Titley's Scholarship; and that on the 11th of June, 1632, the nomination, dated 29th March then last, passed the Corporation seal."

Of Gurnall's history during his residence at Cambridge we know literally nothing, with the exception of the following bald facts. The College books record that William Gurnall, pensioner, of Norfolk, was admitted March 29, 1632, was B.A., 1635, and M.A., 1639. It is certain that he was never elected a Fellow of his College, and as the Lynn Scholarship was only tenable for seven years, it is highly probable that he ceased to reside at Cambridge in the year 1639, when he took his degree as M.A., and received no further assistance from his Scholarship.

It would no doubt be highly interesting, if we knew

something of Gurnall's history during the seven years of his University life. The character of a young man is generally moulded for life during the period between sixteen and twenty-three, and the author of the "Christian in Complete Armour," was probably no exception to this rule. Who were his friends and companions? Who were his tutors and lecturers? Was he a reading man? Whom did he walk with, and talk with? What great preachers did he hear in the University pulpit? What were his habits and ways of employing his time? What side did he espouse in the mighty controversies of the day? All these are questions which it would be very pleasant to have answered. The answers would throw great light on many a passage in his after-life and writings. But the answers unhappily are not forthcoming. The only light that we can throw on Gurnall's University life, consists of a few facts about his College, and the general state of England between 1632 and 1639.

The College to which Gurnall belonged was always famous in the seventeenth century for its theological tendencies. It was eminently a Puritan College.

Sir Walter Mildmay, of Chelmsford, in Essex, was the founder of Emmanuel College, and even from its very foundation in 1585, it seems to have been notorious for its attachment to Puritan principles. Fuller, in his History of Cambridge, relates that on "Sir Walter Mildmay coming to Court, soon after he had

founded his College, Queen Elizabeth said to him, 'Sir Walter, I hear you have erected a Puritan foundation.' 'No, madam,' saith he, 'far be it from me to countenance anything contrary to your established laws; but I have set an acorn, which, when it becomes an oak, God alone knows what will be the fruit thereof.' Sure I am (adds Fuller, writing about 1650) at this day it hath overshadowed all the University, more than a moiety of the present Masters of Colleges being bred therein."

The number of leading divines of the seventeenth century who were educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, is certainly extraordinary. Beside Bishop Hall and Bishop Bedell, we find in the list of its members the names of Stephen Marshall, Jeremiah Burroughs, Thomas Sheppard, Thomas Hooker, Ezekiel Culverwell, Ralph Cudworth, Samuel Crooke, John Cotton, John Stoughton, Anthony Burgess, Laurence Chaderton, John Preston, Anthony Tuckney, Lazarus Seaman, Matthew Poole, Samuel Clarke, Ralph Venning, Thomas Watson, Stephen Charnock, William Bridge, Peter Sterry, Samuel Cradock. Any one familiar with Puritan divinity will see at a glance that this catalogue embraces the names of some of the most eminent Puritan writers. Some of them no doubt were cotemporaries and fellow-students of Gurnall himself.

From inquiries which I have made, I have succeeded

in obtaining some information about Emmanuel College between the years 1632 and 1639, which I think will not be devoid of interest to all admirers of Gurnall. At any rate it will show who were at Emmanuel when he was there, both as an undergraduate and a graduate, and with what kind of minds he was associated.

The Masters at Emmanuel in Gurnall's time were (1) William Sancroft, uncle of the Archbishop, who held the office from 1628 to 1637; and (2) Holdsworth, who held the office from 1637 to 1645, when he was ejected by the Earl of Manchester. He was a zealous advocate of the King, and attended him during his confinement in the Isle of Wight, and soon after, according to Neal, died of grief.

The reason why Gurnall was never elected Fellow of his College, was probably, if I may venture a conjecture, the high character and attainments of his competitors. According to the books of Emmanuel, Ralph Cudworth was elected Fellow in 1639, Worthington (afterward Master of Jesus) in 1641, and Sancroft (afterward Archbishop of Canterbury), in 1642.

The Fellows of Emmanuel between 1632 and 1639 were the following:—Walter Foster, Richard Clarke, John Ward, Thomas Ball, Ezekiel Wright, Thomas Hill, Nicholas Hall, William Bridge, Samuel Bowles, Henry Salmon, David Ensigne, Anthony Burgess,

Thomas Holbeck, Thomas Horton, Malachi Harris, R. Sorsby, Benjamin Whichcot, John Henderson, John Almond, R. Weller, Peter Sterry, Laurence Sarson, John Saddler, Ralph Cudworth.

“All the Fellows,” says a member of Emmanuel, “appear to have been tutors in their day, though some had more pupils than others. As far as our books lead us to infer, Hill, Hall, Burgess, Holbeck, Ensigne, Salmon, Whichcot, all seem to have been most popular tutors in their day. We have no tutors’ books which tell us under whom Gurnall was admitted.”

When I add to the above information the fact, that Horrox, the astronomer, was admitted at Emmanuel in 1632, the same year as Gurnall, and that Archbishop Sancroft, the famous nonjuror, was admitted in 1633, I shall have exhausted all the stock of information that I have been able to scrape together about Gurnall’s College life and his cotemporaries.

Seven years spent at a College like Emmanuel could not fail to have an effect on Gurnall’s mind. Brought up from his boyhood to honour and reverence the Puritans as the excellent of the earth, at Lynn,—trained afterwards at a College where the whole atmosphere was peculiarly Puritan,—it would have been strange indeed if Gurnall had grown up without decided Puritan opinions.

The state of England during the seven years of

Gurnall's University life was very peculiar. It was the crisis of the troubled period between the Reformation and the Commonwealth times. The suicidal and blind misgovernment of Charles I. was rapidly paving the way for the destruction of the throne. The undisguised Romish tendencies and bitter persecutions of Archbishop Laud, and his fellow-workers, were doing the same for the Church of England. From one end of the country to the other there were discontent, murmuring, controversy, bitterness, and party spirit. On every side there were symptoms of a coming break-up, or a violent conflict both in Church and State.

Cambridge, we need not doubt, had its full share of all the troubles and discomfort of this stormy period. The following passage from Fuller's *History of Cambridge* records things which happened there in 1632, the very year that Gurnall entered Emmanuel,—things which no doubt he saw with his own eyes and heard with his own ears:—

"This year," says Fuller, "a grave divine preaching before the University at St. Mary's, had this passage in his sermon: 'That as at the Olympian games he was counted the conqueror who could drive his chariot wheels nearest to the mark, yet so as not to hinder his running, or stick thereon, so he, who in his sermons could preach near Popery, and yet no Popery, there was your man.' And, indeed, it now began to

be the complaint of most moderate men, that many in the University, both in school and pulpit, approached the opinion of the Church of Rome more than ever before.

“ Mr. Bernard, Lecturer of St. Sepulchre’s in London, preached at St. Mary’s in the afternoon of May 6th, his text, 1 Sam. iv. 21: ‘The glory is departed from Israel,’ etc. In handling whereof he let fall some passages which gave distaste to a prevalent party in the University, as for saying: (1) That God’s ordinances, when blended and adulterated with innovations of men, cease to be God’s ordinances, and He owneth them no longer. (2) That it is impossible any should be saved, living and dying without repentance, in the doctrine of Rome, as the Tridentine Council hath decreed it. (3) That treason is not limited to the blood royal; but that he is a traitor against a nation that depriveth it of God’s ordinances. (4) That some shamefully symbolize in Pelagian error and superstitious ceremonies with the Church of Rome. Let us pray such to their conversion or to their destruction, etc.

“ Dr. Cumber, Vice-Chancellor, gave speedy notice hereof to Dr. Laud, Bishop of London, though he (so quick his University intelligence) had information thereof before. Therefore he was brought into the High Commission, and a recantation tendered to him, which he refused to subscribe, though professing his

sincere sorrow and penitency, in his petition and letter to the Bishop, for any oversight and unbecoming expression in his sermon. Hereupon he was sent back to the new prison, where he died. If he was miserably abused therein by his keepers, as some have reported, to the shortening of his life, He that maketh inquisition for blood, either hath, or will be, a revenger thereof."

This deplorable affair took place, let us remember, in the year 1632, the very year that Gurnall came up to reside at Emmanuel. How much stir it would excite among the undergraduates of a thoroughly Puritan College we can easily imagine. All who know anything of an English University, know how ready undergraduates are, as a body, to sympathize with the persecuted and oppressed, and to side with the minority.

It was during Gurnall's residence at Cambridge that Dr. Ward, one of the representatives of the Church of England at the Synod of Dort, gave the following unsatisfactory description of the state of the University, in a letter to Archbishop Usher, dated 1634. He says, "It may be you are willing to hear of our University affairs. I may truly say I never knew them in worse condition since I was a member thereof, which is almost forty-six years." ^a

^a Usher's Correspondence, No. 179.

It was during Gurnall's residence at Cambridge that the infamous sentence on Prynne, Bastwick, and Burton, was passed in the Court of Star Chamber. For publishing certain alleged libels on the Church of England these unfortunate men were condemned to stand in the pillory, and have their ears publicly cut off. The sentence was actually carried into effect, June 30, 1637, in Palace-yard. Bastwick was a physician, who had been educated at Emmanuel College. We can easily imagine the sensation which his punishment would create within the walls of his old College.

It was during Gurnall's residence at Cambridge that the famous disturbances in Scotland arose, out of Archbishop Laud's attempt to introduce the notorious Scotch Liturgy, with its Popish Communion Office, into the churches of Edinburgh. The well-known riot in St. Giles' Church, when a stool was thrown at the Bishop of Edinburgh's head, by a zealous woman called Jenny Geddes, took place on Sunday, July 23, 1637.

It was during Gurnall's residence at Cambridge that John Hampden began the unhappy struggle between the King and his subjects by refusing to pay ship-money. The decision of the Chief Justice was given against him on the 9th of June, 1637.

I mention these facts and dates in order to give the reader some idea of the times in which Gurnall passed

through his University career. We cannot doubt that his character and opinions must have been strongly influenced by them. No one could be at Cambridge from 1632 to 1639, without seeing and hearing things which would leave a mark on his memory for life, and without coming across a stream of conflicting opinions which he would remember to his dying day. No doubt Gurnall became acquainted with some of the best specimens of the Puritan divines. No doubt also he saw in the heart of a Puritan College enough to make him feel that all Puritans were not perfect men. I venture the conjecture that his after-life at every step was greatly influenced by the recollection of what he saw at Emmanuel, Cambridge.

CHAPTER XIII.

GURNALL'S HISTORY FROM CAMBRIDGE TO LAVENHAM.

FIRST FIVE YEARS ENTIRELY UNKNOWN—PROBABLY BEGINS HIS
MINISTRY AT SUDBURY—MANNER OF HIS ORDINATION UNKNOWN
—CONFUSION OF THE TIMES—APPOINTMENT TO LAVENHAM—
CORRESPONDENCE WITH SIR SYMOND D'EWES.

THE five years of Gurnall's life immediately after he left Cambridge, in 1639, are a period in his history of which nothing whatever seems to be known. I must honestly confess that I can throw little light upon it, and can only offer surmises and conjectures. He disappears from our notice on leaving Emmanuel, in 1639. He does not appear again till he is made Rector of Lavenham, in 1644. But how, and where, and in what manner, and in what official capacity, he spent the intervening interval of five years, we have no certain record.

It would be difficult to name five years of English history in which so many important events occurred, as between 1639 and 1644. Within these five years the famous Long Parliament commenced its sittings, the no less famous Westminster Assembly of divines

was convened, Lord Strafford was beheaded, Archbishop Laud committed to prison, and the Courts of High Commission and Star Chamber abolished. Within these five years the civil war between the King and the Parliament actually broke out, the standard was raised at Nottingham, the battles of Edgehill, Newbury, and Marston Moor were fought, and Hampden, Pym, and Lord Falkland were all laid in their graves. Last, but not least, the "Solemn League and Covenant" was subscribed by the adherents of the Parliament side, in which, among other things, they pledged themselves to "endeavour the extirpation of Popery and Prelacy, that is, Church government by archbishops, bishops, their chancellors and commissaries, deans and chapters, archdeacons, and all other ecclesiastical officers depending on that hierarchy."

And what was Gurnall doing all these five years? We cannot tell. Perhaps he was staying quietly with his friends at Lynn. Perhaps he was hearing and learning what he could in London. Perhaps he was turning to account his University education by acting as tutor to some noble or wealthy family, as many young divines did in that day. These are idle conjectures after all. There are only two facts that we know about him. One is that he must have been ordained some time between 1639 and 1644. The other is that he must have preached at Sudbury within this period. This last point is made clear by his own

words, in a letter addressed to Sir Symond D'Ewes, in which he speaks of the Sudbury people making difficulties about his removal to Lavenham.

The subject of Gurnall's entrance into the ministry is shrouded in complete obscurity. There is no one point in his personal history about which we know so little. When he was ordained, where he was ordained, to what cure of souls he was ordained, by whom he was ordained, whether he was first ordained by Episcopal or by Presbyterian ordination, are things about which we are entirely in the dark. After a good deal of troublesome research and investigation into the subject, I must honestly confess that I can find out nothing about it. I have only discovered, by the kindness of the present Bishop of Norwich and the late Bishop of Ely, that his name does not appear in the ordination registers of Norwich and Ely between 1639 and 1644. It is of course possible that he was ordained by the bishop of some other diocese, though even then it is certain that he was only ordained deacon. But it is far more probable that he entered the ministry without receiving Episcopal orders at all. Most likely he was set apart for the work as a Presbyterian minister, by the "laying on of the hands of the Presbytery."

I am not disposed to waste the reader's time by entering into any discussion of the comparative merits of Episcopal and Presbyterian orders, though, of course,

I have my own opinions as a conscientious Episcopalian. I only venture the remark that we have no right to infer anything as to Gurnall's opinions about Episcopacy, from his want of Episcopal orders. We must remember the peculiar times in which he entered the ministry. There was probably no alternative left to him. He must either have been ordained by Presbyterian ordination, or not have been ordained at all.

The plain truth is that the times when Gurnall entered the ministry were times of disorder and confusion. It was a period of transition. Everything that had been settled and established in Church and State was being pulled to pieces. They were strange times, and strange things happened in them. We may well expect to find that there were all sorts of irregularities and diversities of practice about ordination.

Bishop Hall, in his famous account of himself, called "His Hard Measure," makes the following statement, which deserves the more notice because he was Bishop of Norwich, and Lavenham was then in his diocese. He says, "After the Covenant was appointed to be taken (September 26, 1643), and was generally swallowed of both clergy and laity, my power of *ordination* was with some violence restrained. For when I was going on in my wonted course, which no law or ordinance had inhibited, certain forward volunteers in the city, banding together, stirred up the

mayor, and aldermen, and sheriffs (of Norwich), to call me to an account for an open violation of their Covenant.

“To this purpose divers of them came to my gate at a very unseasonable time, and knocking very vehemently, required to speak with the Bishop. Messages were sent to them to know their business; nothing would satisfy them but the Bishop’s presence. At last I came down to them, and demanded what the matter was; they would have the gate opened, and then they would tell me. I answered that I would know them better first; if they had anything to say to me I was ready to hear them. They told me they had a writing for me from the Mayor and some other of their magistrates. The paper contained both a challenge of me for breaking the Covenant, in ordaining ministers, and withal required me to give in the names of those which were ordained by me both then and formerly since the Covenant. My answer was that the Mayor was much abused by those who had misinformed him and drawn that paper from him; that I would the next day give a full answer to the writing. They moved that my answer might be my personal appearance at the guildhall. I asked them when they ever heard of a Bishop of Norwich appearing before a Mayor. I knew mine own place, and would take that way of answer which I thought fit, and so dismissed them, who had given out that day,

that had they known before of mine ordaining, they would have pulled me and those whom I ordained out of the chapel by the ears." (Hall's Works, vol. i., p. 54. P. Hall's edition.)

Let us add to this curious testimony the following passage from Neal, the well-known historian of the Puritans. He says: "From the time of taking the Covenant (Sept. 28, 1643), we may date the entire dissolution of the hierarchy, though it was not as yet abolished by an ordinance of Parliament. There were no ecclesiastical courts, no visitations, no wearing the habits, no regard paid to the canons or ceremonies, or even to the Common Prayer." He says immediately afterwards: "Upon the sitting of the Assembly of Divines all church worship went through their hands. The parishes elected their ministers. The assembly examined and approved of them, and the Parliament confirmed them in their benefices without any regard to the Archbishop or his vicar. Thus the Earl of Manchester filled the vacant pulpits in the associated counties." (Neal's History, vol. iii., pp. 79, 80. Toulmin's edition.)

After reading these passages we may well understand why there is no record of Gurnall's ordination as Deacon in the Registers of Norwich or Ely. He began his ministry in the diocese of Norwich, and was an inhabitant of one of the most thoroughly Puritan districts of the seven "associated counties."

Whether he desired Episcopal Ordination or not we do not know, though his subsequent ordination by Bishop Reynolds, at a later period of his ministry, ought not to be forgotten. But it is highly probable that at the time when he entered the ministry he could not have received Episcopal Ordination even if he had wished it.

The matter after all is not one of primary importance. The Divine right of Episcopacy, to the exclusion of all other forms of Church government, and the absolute necessity of Episcopal Ordination to make a right minister of Christ, are positions that cannot be established from Scripture. The 23rd Article of the Church of England has exhibited a wise moderation in handling the whole question. It says: "It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the Sacrament in the congregation, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same." But the Article cautiously avoids defining too closely what are valid orders. It goes on: "Those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to the work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard." This, we need not doubt, was Gurnall's position. Episcopal Ordination he probably did not receive on entering the ministry, and most likely could not have obtained it. But that he was "lawfully called and

sent into the Lord's vineyard" we need not doubt, though in all probability it was only "by laying on of the hands of the Presbytery."

We now come to the most important event in Gurnall's life, and the one which fixed him down in one spot for the remaining thirty-five years of his life. That event was his appointment to be Minister of the parish of Lavenham, in Suffolk. This, it appears, happened about the month of December, 1644, when he was twenty-eight years old.

The manner of Gurnall's appointment was somewhat singular, and curiously illustrative of the strange and troublesome times in which it took place. Sir Symond D'Ewes, the famous antiquary, was patron of the living of Lavenham, and chief proprietor in the parish. It appears that he gave the living to Gurnall at the request of the parishioners, and the appointment was ratified by order of the House of Commons.

The order of the House of Commons is so peculiar a document, that I venture to transcribe it whole and entire, as M'Keon gives it, from an extract from the Journals of the House, furnished to him by the Clerk of the Journals.

"16^o. Decembris, 1644, 20 Car. 1.

Lavenham } WHEREAS the Church of Lavenham, in the county
Rectory. } of Suffolk, lately became void by the decease of
Ambrose Coppinger, Doctor of Divinity, and that Sir Symond
D'Ewes, patron of the said Church, hath conferred the advowson
of the same upon William Gurnall, Master of Arts, a learned,

godly, and orthodox divine : It is ordered by the House of Commons that the said William Gurnall shall be, and continue, Rector and Incumbent of the same Church during the term of his natural life, and shall have, receive, and enjoy all such tithes, as other Rectors and Incumbents of same Church before him have had, received, and enjoyed. Provided always that the same William Gurnall do pay upon his avoidance all such first fruits and tithes unto his Majesty, as by the laws of this realm are, and shall be due from time to time." (Vol. iii., p. 725.)^a

A careful reader can hardly fail to notice some amusing points in this document. The right of Sir Symond D'Ewes to present is stated and allowed, and yet the presentation must be ratified by the order of the House of Commons ! Gurnall's qualifications are broadly stated. The House declares him to be "learned, godly, and orthodox !" The King's name is carefully brought in (though the Parliament was at open war with him), and provision is inserted for the payment of first fruits to his Majesty ! The name, office, and authority of the Bishop of Norwich, in whose diocese Lavenham was, are as utterly ignored as if they had never existed ! Truly we may say that Gurnall lived in strange times !

What chain of providential circumstances led Gurnall to a town in the south-west corner of Suffolk, after leaving Cambridge, we do not know. Why the good man should turn up at Sudbury and Lavenham, five

^a The same record of Gurnall's presentation, word for word, is to be found in the Norwich Register of Institutions, No. 24, 1638—1648.

years after leaving Emmanuel, is a point which must be left to conjecture. We know nothing certain about it. It is, however, not unworthy of notice, that there was a certain James Gurnall living at Lavenham in 1644, who had a daughter baptized there on the 4th of September in that year. It is by no means improbable, as M'Keon suggests, that this James Gurnall was a relative of the Gurnalls of Lynn, and that the relationship was the cause of William Gurnall visiting Lavenham, and becoming known in the neighbourhood. It is also worthy of notice that Henry Coppinger, who died Rector of Lavenham in 1622, and was father of Gurnall's predecessor, Ambrose Coppinger, was connected by marriage with Gurnall's native place, Lynn. It is stated on a monument erected to his memory in Lavenham church, that he married Ann, daughter of Henry Fisher, of Lynn, in Norfolk. Lynn was not so large a place that the families of Gurnall and Mr. Coppinger would not be acquainted with one another, and this may have been another cause of his settling in Lavenham. These are of course only conjectures, but I think them worth mentioning, and they must be taken for what they are worth.

How Gurnall became acquainted with Sir Symond D'Ewes, and whether he was appointed by him to the Rectory of Lavenham on public or private grounds, we have no means of ascertaining. A statement, quoted by M'Keon from a manuscript in Herald's College, by

Mr. Appleton, about Suffolk, is manifestly a mistake. He says Sir Symond D'Ewes "freely and very willingly gave the Rectory of Lavenham unto Mr. William Gurnall, now Incumbent there, although to him then unknown, at the request of the parish, which hath been much for the benefit of the town in many ways." Appleton was clearly misinformed here. There is a correspondence extant in the Harleian MSS. between Gurnall and Sir Symond D'Ewes, of which the first letter is dated March, 1644. Beside this, Sir Symond was elected M.P. for Sudbury in 1640, and resided in the parish of Lavenham, so that he could hardly fail to know something about Gurnall.

The correspondence between Gurnall and Sir Symond D'Ewes, to which reference has been made, is a curiosity in its way. It consists of eight Latin letters, composed in the most approved classical style, and affording evidence that Gurnall was a tolerably good Latin scholar. Judged by the standard of modern times the matter of these letters is not much to be admired. There is a tone of obsequiousness and flattery about them which to our eyes seems very unworthy of a Christian, and very unlike what we should have expected from a Puritan. But it is only fair to remember the fashion of Gurnall's age. Dedications and letters to public men in the seventeenth century are often stuffed with high-flown language and hyperbolic compliments. It was as common to write in

such a strain as it is for us to sign ourselves "your obedient servant." The words meant nothing, and were only used because it was the custom to use them. If Gurnall had not written his Latin letters to Sir Symond D'Ewes in a very verbose, extravagant, and complimentary style, he would probably have been set down as an illiterate and unpolished man.

Some account of the contents of these eight letters will perhaps be found interesting. They throw a little light, at any rate, on Gurnall's presentation to Lavenham; and if we knew the meaning of the allusions which they contain, we should understand a good deal better than we do now, the history of his settlement in the place with which his name is inseparably connected.^b

The first letter is dated Lavenham, March 26, 1644. It is a petition on behalf of a man who had been wounded in the service of the State, and appears to have been bearer of the letter. It contains some general remarks on the discredit thrown upon religion when wounded soldiers are neglected, and on the duty of providing them with comfortable maintenance. Beside this there is nothing worth notice.

The second letter is dated July 24, 1644. It is endorsed "to the Right Worthy Sir Symond D'Ewes,

^b As a general rule I have given the letters as translated by M'Keon. In a few instances I have attempted to mend his translation.

at his lodgings in Margaret's, Westminster." The place from which it is written is not stated. In this letter for the first time the subject of Gurnall's appointment to Lavenham is mentioned. There seems to have been some difficulty about the matter, which at this distance of time we cannot of course explain. The letter was evidently written while the difficulty was pending. It contains the following passage, which I give in M'Keon's translation in its entirety:—

"I have received your letter breathing nothing but love, and should immediately have answered it, had I not been called into Norfolk on public business. On my return I promised myself some certain grounds for a reply. But alas! the knot which I left to be untied I found still more perplexed and involved, so that I appeared, like the ship of St. Paul, to have 'fallen into a place where two seas met.' While my mind is fixed on Lavenham, there threatens a storm at Sudbury, which accuses me of being lured by a golden bait. But were I to refuse this providence held out to me by your hands, I might, not unjustly, appear disobedient to God, and ungrateful to you who offer it to me. In such a storm a skilful pilot (I mean Solomon) suggested to me, 'in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.' Most willingly therefore did I submit the hearing and determining the whole cause to certain ministers in my neighbourhood. If I must die, I could wish it should be in the hands of

the most skilful physicians ; if I must err, I should wish it to be among men most famous for their learning and piety. In a short time I hope to finish this whole business, and then I will write again to your honour."

This is a curious letter. One would like to know what was the knotty point which Gurnall could not untie, and who were the "certain ministers" whom he consulted. One thing at any rate it helps to confirm. It seems to indicate that Gurnall was a Minister at Sudbury before he was Rector of Lavenham. Yet it is a singular fact, that at the present time no inhabitant of Sudbury, to whom I have applied, seems to know anything about Gurnall's connection with the town.

The third letter is dated Sudbury, September 1, 1644. At the time when it was written it was evidently a settled thing, that Gurnall should have the living of Lavenham, though the appointment was not yet completed. Amidst a quantity of verbose and fulsome compliments, which can only be excused by the customs of Gurnall's day, the following paragraphs are worth quoting :—

"I firmly believe, most worshipful, that the only happiness which you hope or wish for in this filthy world is that of doing good. In this humble and grateful disposition therefore, you may triumph that the numerous population of Lavenham now enjoy under your shadow the gospel."—

“If God should bless my slender labours, whatever they may be, as many as may be imbued with divine light, or cherished with its dew, will be a solace, and even a crown to you, under whose shield I fight. Happy indeed, still more and more, might we have had the English nation, which we now see so universally torn by civil wars, if with the same care with which you have laboured, all our patrons had striven in the propagation of the gospel. But alas! many make market of the souls of others, while they peril their own. This will redound to your great honour. Not less do you strive to give than others to sell the priesthood.”

The postscript to this letter is curious. Gurnall says, “One thing at the end of your letter I had almost forgot. You therein just mention the Bishop. My doubts increase as to the propriety of going to him, particularly since the opinions both of the clergy and of the people have become known to me.”

The fourth letter is dated Lavenham, October 26, 1644. It is a complimentary letter written on the occasion of Sir Symond D'Ewes giving Gurnall a copy of some antiquarian work he had lately published. It contains no allusion to the subject of the living of Lavenham, and there is nothing in it worth quoting.

The fifth letter is dated Lavenham, November 21, 1644, and is one of the most important of the whole series. I shall therefore give it entire

“Right worshipful Sir,—At length my frail bark, after a difficult navigation, has safely reached the port of Lavenham. Nothing now remains for me but to return my thanks to you, under whose shadow I enjoy this happiness, and with sound principles to imbue, and with paternal care to instruct, the numerous people which you have committed to me, particularly in times like these, fermenting with many errors, when, like Rome of old, who borrowed gods from all parts of the world, we also borrow errors which have already been buried, and yet after burial again revive. My only solace in this world will now be to preserve, by earnest and continued prayer, this my congregation, pure and unspotted amongst so many corruptions.

“By your letter to Henry Coppinger, I find that certain of the Sudbury people, in your hearing, have said that some new agreement had been entered into between us. I wonder from whence this fable has taken its origin. I do not admit one atom of it. It is nothing new for the sweetest wine of love sometimes to degenerate into vinegar. I hope, however, in a short time that my Sudbury friends will be restored to their former serenity, although like the troubled sea they are now in a state of considerable agitation. With respect to the Bishop, I hope he will find some other way of instituting me, or else your most honourable House will do it. And all the in-

habitants of Lavenham most humbly congratulate you, right worshipful, for that in this affair you have left no stone unturned. We also earnestly desire that the matter may, if possible, be completed within these six months, which are now fast wearing away. I would willingly go to London in order that whatever remains to be done may receive the finishing stroke. May the great and good God pour His blessing on thee and thine, and may He continue to be thy sun and shield. So prays most earnestly your very humble servant in Christ, WILLIAM GURNALL."

The matter referred to in the letter can of course only be explained by conjecture. It certainly seems to indicate that Gurnall was once a popular Minister at Sudbury, and that his removal to the Rectory of Lavenham was not approved by the Sudbury people. The six months mentioned most probably mean the six months immediately following the last Rector's death. The precise date of the death of Coppinger, Gurnall's predecessor, is not known.

The sixth letter is dated Lavenham, January 6th, 1645. It is clear from its contents, that whatever may have been the difficulties which stood in the way of his appointment to Lavenham, they were now all overcome, and he was finally settled in possession of the living. He says: "Honoured Sir, most opportunely have I received the order of your honourable House. By your care and exertion alone

has it been obtained; and all your favours toward me have, by this fresh proof of your kindness, been brought to a completion—this last having given perfection to the rest. What is a presentation without orders? What are orders without institution? Successfully, however, have you finished all these things, so that my thanks are due to you, not only as patron, but as ordainer and institutor, for under your auspices all these things have been performed. I well know how much of your time is occupied by public business, while the arduous affairs of the nation are under consideration, and also with what indefatigable labour you pursue more severe studies. The weight therefore of this your favour is so much the more increased, when we see that among matters of greater importance you still find leisure to attend to these our affairs, trifling indeed in comparison, but such as would, I believe, from our want of skill, have been a complete snare to us, had we not been speedily delivered from them by your prudence.”

About the matters referred to in this letter, we know nothing more than what Gurnall tells us. His expressions certainly seem to imply that he owed his ordination, by whatever hands he was ordained, to the interest of Sir Symond D'Ewes.

The seventh letter is dated Lavenham, March 20, 1647. It contains nothing worth quoting, and is entirely occupied with lamentations over the troub-

lous times which the nation was passing through, and words of devout encouragement to Sir Symond D'Ewes, whose position in Parliament was probably not a very easy one at this period.

The eighth and last letter is dated October 30, 1648, and was evidently written in reply to an order of the House of Commons, calling on Gurnall to preach before the House. He says, among other things, "Your letter reached me yesterday as I was descending from the pulpit, thoroughly fatigued; and to-day, having finished one sermon, I am preparing another for to-morrow. You will therefore, I trust, readily pardon both the brevity and unpolished style of my answer. As to the affair mentioned in your letter to me, that I have been, by an order of the House, appointed to preach before you on the 29th of November next, it is a burden much too weighty for my shoulders, particularly at this time, when so many infirmities oppress me, that I can scarcely, without danger to my health, remain a short time in the open air. Much less therefore could I undertake so long a journey in so winterly a season. I am persuaded that the gentlemen who have proposed this, know not the shattered state of my body, and have scarcely considered the distance of the place. Most humbly and earnestly therefore I entreat that, by your persuasion, which I know to be unparalleled, and in that honourable House most weighty, this burden may be laid on

other shoulders ; for under it, in my infirm state of health, I must of necessity sink."

This letter is interesting on more than one account. It shows the high esteem in which Gurnall was held as a preacher. None but the most eminent and gifted divines of the day were summoned to preach before the House of Commons. It also shows the weak state of health in which Gurnall was at a comparatively early period of his ministry at Lavenham. To this state of health we may perhaps attribute the retired life which he seems to have lived, and the comparatively small information which we possess about him.

CHAPTER XIV.

GURNALL'S MINISTRY AT LAVENHAM.

DESCRIPTION OF LAVENHAM—HISTORY OF THE PARISH, LIVING, AND CHURCH—DIVINES WHO LIVED WITHIN REACH OF LAVENHAM—GURNALL'S CONFORMITY IN 1662—REFLECTIONS ON HIS CONDUCT.

HAVING now brought Gurnall to the place where he lived and exercised his ministry for no less than thirty-five years, some information about Lavenham will probably be interesting to most readers.

Lavenham is a small town in the south-west corner of Suffolk, lying in a rural parish of about 2800 acres, and containing at this time about 1800 people. In Gurnall's time it was in the diocese of Norwich. It is now in the diocese of Ely. It had once a market; and before the invention of the steam-engine, was famous for the manufacture of blue cloth and serge, for the better regulation of which, three guilds, or companies, of St. Peter's, Holy Trinity, and Corpus Christi, were established. Its manufactures have now dwindled down into one silk-mill, and its market is no longer held. The market-place, with an ancient cross in the centre, exists still. The De Veres, Earls of Oxford, were once the principal proprietors of Lavenham, and

had a large park here, comprising nearly half the parish. In the reign of Elizabeth, Edward, then Earl of Oxford, sold his property at Lavenham, together with the advowson of the living, to Paul D'Ewes, Esq., father of Sir Symond D'Ewes, the patron of William Gurnall, and to this sale therefore the good man's connection with Lavenham must be traced.

The living to which Gurnall was appointed was, no doubt, a very valuable one. At this day the tithes are commuted at £850 a year, and there are 140 acres of glebe attached to the Rectory. Allowing for the difference in the value of money two hundred years ago, the Rector of Lavenham must have been comparatively very well off. It is however a curious fact, recorded by Fuller in his "Church History," that in the year 1577, the living of Lavenham had a narrow escape of being reduced to half its value, and was only saved by the firmness of the Rector. The whole transaction is worth reading, as illustrating the disorders and irregularities in ecclesiastical matters, which great laymen too often attempted to perpetrate in the sixteenth century, and too often with success.

Fuller says, "In the year, 1622, Henry Coppinger, formerly Fellow of St. John's College in Cambridge, Prebendary of York, once Chaplain to Ambrose, Earl of Warwick (whose funeral sermon he preached), made Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, by his Majesty's mandates, though afterwards resigning his

right at the Queen's request (shall I call it ?), to prevent trouble, ended his religious life. He was the sixth son of Henry Coppinger, Esq., of Buxhall, in Suffolk, by Agnes, daughter of Sir Thomas Jermyn. His father, on his death-bed, asking him what course of life he would embrace, he answered he intended to be a divine. 'I like it well,' said the old gentleman, 'otherwise what shall I say to Martin Luther when I shall see him in heaven, and he knows that God gave me eleven sons, and I made not one of them a minister?' An expression proportionable enough to Luther's judgment, who maintained, some hours before his death, that the saints in heaven shall knowingly converse one with another.

"Lavenham living fell void, which both deserved a good minister, being a rich parsonage, and needed one, it being more than suspected that Dr. Reynolds, late Incumbent, who ran away to Rome, had left some superstitious leaven behind him. The Earl of Oxford being patron, presents Mr. Coppinger to it, but adding withal, that he would pay no tithes of his park, being almost half the land of the parish. Coppinger desired to resign it again to his lordship, rather than by such sinful gratitude to betray the rights of the Church. 'Well!' said the Earl, 'if you be of that mind, then take the tithes; I scorn that my estate should swell with Church goods.' However, it afterwards cost Mr. Coppinger sixteen hundred pounds in keeping his

questioned, and recovering his detained right, in suit with the agent for the next minor Earl of Oxford and others; all which he left to his church's quiet possession, being zealous in God's cause, but remiss in his own.

"He lived forty and five years the painful parson at Lavenham, in which market-town there are about nine hundred communicants, among whom, all this time, no difference did arise which he did not compound. He had a bountiful hand and plentiful purse (his paternal inheritance by death of elder brothers and other transactions, descending upon him), bequeathing twenty pounds in money, and ten pounds per annum, to the poor of the parish; in the chancel whereof he lieth buried under a fine monument, dying on St. Thomas' day, in the threescore and twelfth year of his age."

The lawsuit referred to by Fuller seems at any rate not to have prevented Henry Coppinger being succeeded by his son Ambrose as Rector of Lavenham, at whose death Gurnall was appointed to the living. The Henry Coppinger referred to by Gurnall in one of his letters to Sir Symond D'Ewes, was no doubt a member of the family of Gurnall's predecessor, and a descendant of the Rector whose firmness preserved half the tithes of Lavenham from the Earl of Oxford's shameful attempt to deprive the living of them.

The parish Church of Lavenham, in which Gurnall preached for thirty-five years, must naturally possess

much interest in the eyes of all true admirers of his works. The pulpit in which the good man preached the substance of "The Christian in Complete Armour," no longer exists. But the fabric of the church is in all probability exactly what it was two hundred years ago.

Lavenham Church is one of the finest and handsomest ecclesiastical buildings in the county of Suffolk. "It stands at the west end of the town, and was erected on the site of the ancient fabric, in the 15th and early part of the 16th centuries, chiefly at the cost of the Earl of Oxford, and the wealthy family of Spring, whose arms are to be seen in many parts of the building. It is in the later style of decorated English architecture, and is constructed of freestone, curiously ornamented with flint, a material commonly used in Suffolk churches, from the scarcity of stone. It is 156 feet long, and 68 broad. The tower, which is of singular beauty, is 141 feet high, and 42 in diameter, and contains an excellent peal of eight bells, of which the tenor weighs 23 cwt., and was cast in 1625. In the interior the roof is richly carved, and two pews, formerly belonging to the Earls of Oxford and the Springs, though now somewhat decayed, are highly finished specimens of Gothic work, in the elaborate style of Henry VII.'s Chapel at Westminster. In the windows are considerable remains of ancient stained glass, and the porch is of highly ornamental architecture, adorned with armorial bearings." The above

account is principally extracted from White's "History of Suffolk," and I have no reason to doubt the accuracy of the details it contains.

At the present day there can be no doubt that Lavenham is a far less important place than it was two hundred years ago. The county in which it is situated no longer occupies the position it once occupied among the counties of England. Without mines or manufactures, or large seaport towns, the eastern counties have stood still in material prosperity, while the rest of England has moved on. The village towns, with which Suffolk is rather thickly dotted, are almost all in a decaying or stationary condition. The old glory of such places as Eye, Framlingham, Bungay, Orford, Southwold, Dunwich, Aldeburgh, Hadleigh, Bildeston, and Debenham, has clean passed away. Lavenham has shared the fate of these places. It is now nothing more than a quiet village in an agricultural district, remarkable only for its beautiful church and its numerous old charitable institutions.

The thirty-five years during which Gurnall lived at Lavenham, and filled the pulpit of the old parish church, were years full of stirring incidents in English history. The final overthrow of the King's party in the Commonwealth wars, the beheading of Charles I., the establishment of the Protectorate, the death of Oliver Cromwell, the restoration of the Stuarts to the throne, the passing of the Act of Uniformity, the

ejection of two thousand Ministers of the Church of England which followed that act, and the intolerant persecution of all nonconformists which disgraced this country for many years after the Act was passed, are events with which every student of English history is familiar. What Gurnall thought of most of these we have no means of knowing. What part he took, if any, and how he acted amidst the political and ecclesiastical convulsions which distracted the country, we cannot say. His health in all probability prevented him from frequently leaving his own home, or doing much outside his own parish. Be the cause what it may, I am obliged to confess that the facts on record about the last thirty-five years of his life are exceedingly few.

It is certainly somewhat remarkable that during the period of Gurnall's ministry at Lavenham, that is between 1644 and 1679, some of the best and holiest Puritan divines were at one time or another living within twenty miles of Gurnall's home at Lavenham. I will give their names.

The famous John Owen, whose name is familiar to every reader of pure English theology, began his ministry at Fordham and Coggeshall in Essex, and only left the latter place when Cromwell made him Dean of Christ Church, and Vice-Chancellor of Oxford, in 1650, six years after Gurnall became Rector of Lavenham.

Stephen Marshall, one of the most celebrated divines in the Westminster Assembly, and a prominent character in the Commonwealth times, was Minister of Wethersfield and Finchingfield, in Essex, shortly before Gurnall came to Lavenham, and spent the last two years of his life at Ipswich, where he died in 1655.

Matthew Newcomen, another eminent member of the Westminster Assembly, and an assistant of Arrow-smith and Tuckney in drawing up the well-known Assembly's Catechism, was Vicar of Dedham in Essex, after the famous John Rogers was ejected in 1629, until the time of his own ejection by the Act of Uniformity, in 1662.

Thomas Young, another distinguished member of the Westminster Assembly, and Milton's tutor, was Vicar of Stowmarket, in Suffolk, for the thirty years before 1643, when he became Pastor of a Church in Duke's Place, London. Afterwards, being ejected in 1650, he retired to Stowmarket, and died there in 1655. He was one of the five authors of the famous controversial work, called "Smectymnuus," which made a great stir in the first half of the seventeenth century. It was so called from the initial letters of the names of its five writers: viz., Stephen Marshall, Edmund Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spurstow. Of these five men, let us remember, no less than three died within a few hours' reach of Gurnall.

It would be easy to add other great names to this list, such as those of *Daniel Rogers*, who died at Wethersfield in 1652; *Blackerby*, who died at Great Thurlow in 1648; *Fairclough*, who was ejected from Kedington in 1662, and was succeeded by Tillotson; and *Owen Stockton*, who was ejected from St. Andrew's, Colchester, in 1662. Beside these good men, there were some who are less well known, such as William Sparrow of Halstead in Essex, John Fairfax of Barking in Suffolk, Matthias Candler of Coddensham in Suffolk, Samuel Spring of Creting St. Mary in Suffolk, Stephen Scanderet of Haverhill in Suffolk, Tobias Leg of Hemingstone in Suffolk, Brunning and Stonham of Ipswich, Storer of Stowmarket,—all of whom were eminent Puritan Ministers, and were ejected in 1662. Their histories will be found in Calamy's "Nonconformists' Memorial." All these men, I repeat, lived within twenty miles of Gurnall, and must have come in contact with him occasionally.

It would be deeply interesting if we knew whether Gurnall had much communication with these good men. My own private impression is that he had not. Ill-health in all probability kept him much at home. But I suspect this was not all. I am inclined to think that Gurnall was a man of retiring and cautious temperament, and naturally disinclined to go much into society. Above all, I am strongly inclined to think that he liked the Episcopal Church and the Prayer-

book better than many of his neighbours did, and naturally withdrew from close intimacy with them. All these, however, are only conjectures, and I shall therefore pass on to the only remaining facts that remain to be told about Gurnall's history.

In the year 1645, the year following his appointment to Lavenham, Gurnall was married to Sarah Mott, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Mott, Vicar of Stoke by Nayland. By this lady, who survived him some years, he had ten children, eight of whom were living at his death.

In the year 1662, when no less than two thousand Ministers were ejected from the Church of England by the Act of Uniformity, Gurnall signed the declaration required by the Act, on August 20th, was ordained Priest by the Bishop of Norwich, the well-known Bishop Reynolds, on August 21st, and went through the forms of Episcopal institution to Lavenham on the presentation of Thomas Bowes, of Bromley Hall, in Essex, a connection of the D'Ewes family, on August 22nd. The close proximity of these three dates is very remarkable! The result was, that while many of his Puritan brethren resigned their preferments, he retained his position as Rector of Lavenham until his death.

This part of Gurnall's history undoubtedly demands some consideration. At first sight undeniably there is something curious about it. That a Minister of at

least eighteen years' standing should submit to receive Priest's orders at a Bishop's hands—that a preacher of notoriously Puritan sentiments should sit still and retain his connection with the Church of England, while nearly all his Puritan brethren around him seceded—in all this there is something strange. That it really was so is as certain as possible. A facsimile of his subscription, which I have obtained from the Registry of Norwich, places the matter beyond doubt. It is a doubly interesting document, as containing the only specimen I know of Gurnall's hand-writing.^a

That Gurnall's conformity brought on him great obloquy and reproach we may well suppose. A libellous attack^b on him was published in the year 1665, quoted by Bishop Kennett, which contains the following passage. "Neither is Mr. Gurnall alone in these

^a By the kindness of the Bishop of Norwich, I have been enabled to verify all the three remarkable dates above given from the Registry at Norwich.

^b The title of this libellous attack is so curious that I give it entire. "Covenant Renouncers Desperate Apostates, opened in two letters, written by a Christian friend to Mr. W. Gurnall, of Lavenham Suffolk, which may indefinitely serve as an admonition to all such Presbyterian Ministers or others, who have forced their conscience, not only to leap over, but to renounce their solemn covenant obligation to endeavour a reformation according to God's Word, and the extirpation of all prelatical superstitions, and contrary thereunto conform to those superstitious vanities against which they had so solemnly sworn. Printed in Anti-turn-coat Street, and sold at the sign of Truth's Delight, right opposite to Backsliding Alley. 4to, 1665."

horrible defilements, hateful to the Word of God and His saints, but is compassed about with a cloud of witnesses, even in the same county where himself liveth, men of the same order of anti-Christian priesthood and brethren in the same iniquity with himself."

That he brought on himself much private sorrow and discomfort by his conformity we may easily believe. His own wife's father, Mr. Mott, of Stoke by Nayland, was one of the two thousand who went out of the Church of England for conscience' sake. Above all, the value of his living at Lavenham, and the large size of the family dependent on him, would be sure to cause men to cast suspicion on what he did, and to question the sincerity of his motives.

But after all, the point remains to be considered, did Gurnall do anything inconsistent with his character as a Minister of Christ? Was there anything abstractedly wrong in his conformity? Was there anything in the antecedents of his history to make it base or dishonourable to retain his post at Lavenham, to subscribe the declaration of the Act of Uniformity, to assent to the liturgy, and to submit to receive Priest's orders at Bishop Reynolds' hands? On these points I have something to say.

I shall clear the way by saying that I thoroughly disapprove the Act of Uniformity, although personally I feel no difficulty about its requirements. To show my own feeling about it, I need only refer my readers

to a long passage in my biography of Baxter, in this volume, in which the Act of Uniformity is plainly condemned.

But while I protest against the Act of Uniformity as an unjust, unwise, impolitic, unstatesmanlike, and hard measure, I do not for a moment admit that no good man could possibly submit to its requirements. On the contrary, I can quite understand that many holy and faithful Ministers would do as Gurnall did, and act as he acted. They would argue that we cannot have everything to our mind in this world below—that the way of patience is better than the way of secession—that there is nothing abstractedly wrong in forms of prayer—that it is better to put up with some things we do not like in a Church, than to throw away opportunities of usefulness—that it was better to accept the Prayer-book with all its blemishes, and have liberty to preach the gospel, than to refuse the Prayer-book and be silenced altogether—that so long as the thirty-nine Articles were sound and uninjured, they could not be compelled to preach unsound doctrine—and that so long as they were allowed to preach sound doctrine, they ought not to refuse the opportunity, but to preach, and stand by their flocks. All this I can conceive a good man saying to himself. Whether Gurnall reasoned in this manner I cannot pretend to say. But I think he might have done so.

The plain truth is, that before any one condemns

Gurnall for submitting to the Act of Uniformity, he ought in common justice to remember the times and circumstances in which Gurnall first entered the ministry. He became a Minister of the Gospel at a period in English history when it was impossible to obtain Episcopal ordination, and the use of the Prayer-book was almost forbidden. I have no doubt he was quite right in accepting the position of things which he found around him. The imposition of Episcopal hands is not absolutely necessary to make a valid ordination. The use of the Church of England liturgy is not essential to the being of a Church. At the time when Gurnall entered the ministry he could neither have Episcopacy nor the Prayer-book, and he entered the ministry without them. Let others say what they will, I do not think he was wrong. It is better to have the Gospel preached without Bishops and Prayer-books, than not to have any preaching at all.

But after all, there is not the slightest proof that Gurnall had any conscientious objection either to Episcopacy or the liturgy of the Church of England. For anything we can discover, he had never committed himself to any such condemnation of them as to make it inconsistent to approve and adopt them. What right then have we to find fault with him because he submitted to the requirements of the act of 1662? He was ordained Priest by Bishop Reynolds, because he could not be an Incumbent in the diocese without

priest's orders. But who shall say that he would not gladly have received Episcopal orders twenty years before if it had been possible to obtain them? He declared his assent and consent to all things contained in the Prayer-book. But who shall say that he would not have done the same at any period in his life? He had never been a member of the Westminster Assembly, like many of the two thousand ejected divines. He had never been mixed up in their public proceedings, discussions, and controversies, like Owen, Newcomen, Baxter, and many more. He had been a quiet retired preacher in a country parish, and there is really no proof whatever that his retention of his position at Lavenham was inconsistent with anything in his previous life.

One more circumstance ought not to be forgotten in forming our estimate of Gurnall's conduct at this crisis of his life. The Bishop in whose diocese he was living, and at whose hands he accepted re-ordination, was Bishop Reynolds, himself a Puritan in doctrine, and notoriously the most mild and lenient man on the Episcopal bench in dealing with scrupulous clergymen. We cannot doubt that such a man as Reynolds would use every effort to meet Gurnall's scruples, if he had any. We cannot doubt that he would strain every nerve to retain as many of the clergy as possible within the pale of the Church, and to prevent secessions. I confess to a strong suspicion that this circumstance

weighed much in Gurnall's mind. Few men can do more by kindness, and less by harshness, in dealing with men, than Bishops. If Gurnall ever had any doubts about remaining in the Church of England, in 1662, I think it very likely that his good Bishop's character turned the scale. In short, I venture the guess, that he might have gone out of Lavenham Rectory, and followed his father-in-law, Mr. Mott, in secession, if the occupier of Norwich Palace had been any other Bishop than Reynolds.^c

I leave the subject of Gurnall's conduct in 1662 with the reader. It is one on which different men will have different opinions, according to the standpoint which they occupy. Some in the present day would have thought more highly of Gurnall if he had refused to submit to the Act of Uniformity, and had gone out with the famous two thousand. I, and many

^c Reynolds was made Bishop of Norwich by Charles II., in 1661. He was a thorough Puritan and a prominent member of the famous Westminster Assembly of Divines. When the Bishopric of Norwich was offered to him, the Bishopric of Hereford at the same time was offered to Baxter, the Bishopric of Lichfield to Calamy, the Deanery of Rochester to Manton, and the Deanery of Coventry to Bates. All these eminent Puritan divines refused preferment when Reynolds accepted it. Their refusal, I venture to think, was the greatest misfortune that ever befell the Church of England, and the most singular instance of mistaken judgment on record in Church history. If Reynolds, Baxter, and Calamy had all been Bishops, and sat in the House of Lords, and Manton and Bates had been Deans, I doubt if the Act of Uniformity, in its present shape, could ever have been passed.

others perhaps, think more highly of him because he held his ground and did not secede. Which of us is right will never, probably, be settled in this world. I only desire to record my own opinion, that Gurnall was probably just as courageous, conscientious and high-principled in deciding to stay in, as hundreds of his two thousand ejected brethren were in deciding to go out. In movements like that of 1662, the seceding party has not always a monopoly of grace and courage. There were many cases, I have no doubt, in which it showed more courage to submit to the Act of Uniformity than to refuse submission, and in which it cost a man far more to hold his living than to throw it up. I should not wonder if Gurnall's was one.

About Gurnall's life after the year 1662 we know literally nothing at all. We may well suppose that his latter years were saddened by the events of the year 1662. Human nature would not be what it is, if his retention of his position, and subscription to the Act of Uniformity, did not create some estrangement of feeling between himself and his seceding brethren. But we really have no right to speak decidedly on the matter. There are floating traditions in the neighbourhood of Lavenham that he never was the same man as a Minister after 1662, that he had been before: that there was no power or blessing attending his ministry from that time forward. But I must plainly say, that I cannot discover any foundation for these traditions.

I regard them as nothing better than lying stories. Such stories are often current about eminent servants of Christ. His refusal to give up his post at Lavenham, when many other Ministers seceded, would no doubt give great annoyance to the bitterest and most extreme nonconformists in that part of Suffolk, since it would weaken their hands and strengthen the Church of England. I should therefore expect, as a matter of course, that all manner of false reports would be current about him. Lies are Satan's chief weapons against God's saints.

CHAPTER XV.

GURNALL'S LAST DAYS AND LITERARY REMAINS.

DIES IN 1679—COPY OF HIS WILL—FUNERAL SERMON BY BURKITT
—NAMES OF HIS CHILDREN—ACCOUNT OF HIS FAMOUS BOOK
“CHRISTIAN IN COMPLETE ARMOUR”—ITS PECULIARITIES
POINTED OUT—HIS OTHER WORKS—VALUE OF PURITAN THE-
OLOGY.

GURNALL died, October 12th, 1679, and was buried at Lavenham, in the sixty-third year of his age. There is internal evidence, we have already seen, in his letters and elsewhere, that he was always a man of weak health. But we know not whether he died suddenly or of a lingering illness. The fact, however, that he made his will the day before he died would rather point to the conclusion that he had been ill some time.

M'Keon, to whose biography of Gurnall I have so frequently referred, has procured a copy of Gurnall's will, which I here subjoin, as it may interest many readers.—

“In the name of God Amen. The Eleventh day of October, in the year of our Lord, One Thousand Six Hundred and Seventy-nine, I, William Gurnall of Lavenham, in the county of Suffolk, clerk, weak of body, but thanks be to God, of sound mind and memory, resigning up my soul in the first place into the hands of

God, my Lord, Redeemer, and Saviour, and yielding my body to the earth, to be buried at the discretion of my executrix, as concerning that worldly estate which it has pleased God to bestow upon me, do make and ordain, this, my last will and testament as followeth :—That is to say, I give and decree all my free land and tenements, with all their appurtenances whatsoever, lying and being in Walpole or elsewhere, in Monkland, in the county of Norfolk, unto Sarah, my well-beloved wife and her heirs, to hold to her, the said Sarah, to her own proper use, for, and during the time of her natural life, and after her decease to some one of my children, as she shall declare in, and by her last will and testament. And I do give and decree also all my goods and chattels, debts, and personal estate whatsoever, unto the said Sarah, my well-beloved wife, as well for her own comfortable subsistence and maintenance, and the better to enable her for the bringing up of my younger children, as also in trust and confidence that she will preserve and dispose of the residue and surplusage thereof amongst my children, respecting the circumstances of those of them which are not yet provided for, in such manner, and in such proportion as in her discretion she shall think most meet and fit; only I decree, if my son John shall be a scholar, that she will give my books to him. And I do hereby nominate, constitute, and appoint the said Sarah, my well-beloved wife, to be sole executrix of this my will, which I have caused to be written and have thereunto set my hand and seal, the day of grace aforesaid. Subscribed, sealed, published, and declared by the said William Gurnall, to be his last will and testament, in the presence of us, Thomas Mott, Bezaleel Peachie, John Pinchbeck.”

The first of these three witnesses was most probably the father or brother of Mrs. Gurnall. She was daughter of Thomas Mott. The second was evidently the husband of his third daughter, Catherine. The third was perhaps the lawyer who drew up the will. The books mentioned in the will are probably the very books which Gurnall's son, John, afterwards left by his will, in 1699, to his brother Joseph, and his nephew

Leonard Shaftoe of Newcastle. The English books were left to Joseph Gurnall, and the "rest of the books and manuscripts" to Leonard Shaftoe. They are now probably scattered to the four winds, and dispersed, if not destroyed. The end to which good men's libraries finally come, is a melancholy subject. Few things are so much loved by some, and despised and neglected by others as books, and specially theological books.

The precise spot in which Gurnall was buried is not known. We cannot tell whether his bones are lying in the church or in the churchyard. No tombstone or monumental slab marks the place of his interment. Nothing, from some cause or other, seems to have been erected to his memory. "The only sepulchral notice to be found of him," says M'Keon, "is on a black marble slab in the chancel, which has this inscription:—

'Here lieth the body of Mary, late wife of Mr. Henry Boughton, of this parish, and daughter of the late Reverend Mr. Samuel Beachcroft, Rector of Semer, and grand-daughter of the late Reverend Mr. William Gurnall, who was Rector of this parish thirty-five years. She died the 14th of October, 1741, aged 78 years.'"

Under this slab in the chancel is a vault, which M'Keon conjectures is Gurnall's resting-place, from the fact of Mrs. Boughton having been buried here instead of being buried with the Boughton family in the family vault, near the great south door. However, it is only a conjecture.

A funeral sermon was preached in Lavenham Church, in commemoration of Gurnall, shortly after his funeral, by the well-known commentator on the New Testament, Burkitt, who was at that time Rector of Milden, near Lavenham. It is still extant, and bears the following title: "The people's zeal provoked to an holy emulation by the pious and instructive example of their dead Minister; as a seasonable memento to the parishioners of Lavenham in Suffolk."

Burkitt's sermon was on Heb. xiii. 7: "Remember them that have the rule over you," &c. It was both preached and published "by request," and is prefaced by an epistle dedicatory "to my honoured friend, Mrs. Sarah Gurnall, the sorrowful relict of Mr. William Gurnall, late of Lavenham, deceased, and to the rest of the sorrowing inhabitants of that town." It is a respectable composition, though somewhat quaint, and rather flowery and high-flown in style. But it is but fair to Burkitt to remember that he was comparatively young when he preached it, being only twenty-nine years old. A few extracts from it will probably be found interesting. I shall select these parts only which refer to Gurnall.

Burkitt's Epistle dedicatory concludes with the following passage:—"To inform and convince you how highly accountable you are to Almighty God, both for the long enjoyment of his ministry, and also for the happy advantage of his example, is the honest design

of the following sermon ; and also to let this censorious age (in which some persons are so overgrown with the anti-episcopal jaundice, that their eye can see nothing in a Conformist but what is discoloured and of a different tincture), understand and know that you had a Conformist for your Minister, who rendered solid religion amiable, by a conversation in all things worthy of it ; who did by a regular piety, a strict sobriety, a catholic and diffusive charity, render religion venerable to the world ; one whose whole time, strength, and parts, were piously devoted to God and his sacred service.

“Moses, I observe, was in one particular privileged by God above all other holy persons. Their souls (in common with his) at death have angels for their convoy towards the mansions of bliss and glory : but he had an angel for his sexton, who buried his body in an unknown place, lest the Israelites should superstitiously idolize and adore it. There would be no fear at all of any such offensive adoration on your part, were I able (as indeed I am not) to draw to the life the fair effigies of your absent minister, who was, like Moses, faithful in all God’s house whilst he lived, and not unlike him at his death : his meek soul gliding from him in a fine imperceptible vehicle ; and he dying as the modern Jews by tradition tells us Moses did, *ad nutum Dei, et osculo oris ejus*,—at God’s beck, and as it were with a kiss of God’s mouth. It was no more betwixt God and them but this,—Go up and die.

“To conclude then, may all your practices appear to the world in a faithful compliance with what was truly imitable and praise-worthy in him. May the living example of your dead Minister be exemplified in the lives of you his people. May you daily dress by his glass, and walk in his pious and devout footsteps. May you all meet him with astonishing joy, and behold him also with unutterable delight and comfort, in the day of your great audit: this is, and ever shall be, the hearty and affectionate supplication of your sympathizing friend and servant,

“*Milden, Dec. 10, 1679.*”

“WILLIAM BURKITT.”

The sermon contains the following sentences which are worth transcribing: “How lovely was that copy of religion which he set before you in his daily conversation! So forcible was the majesty of that holiness that shined forth in him, that it did extort a veneration from its most violent opposers; and so convictive also that it pierced the very consciences of his enemies, and constrained them whom prejudice only had made his foes, tacitly to acknowledge that God was in him of a truth.” (p. 9, Baynes’ reprint, 1829.)

Again: “He being dead, yet speaketh: yea, dead as well as living, he is still your preacher, his shroud and coffin are his pulpit—his grave and tombstone are his temple, and he still preaches to you though he lies in silence before you and utters never a word; I mean

by his pious and most instructive example left among you, and by that fair character and good report which he hath so deservedly obtained with you." (p. 10, 11.)

Again: "I am sure it did not a little conduce to the support of your dying Minister's spirit, when he had death before him in immediate prospect, to hope upon good grounds that he (as a spiritual father) should leave many children behind him, to carry on the work of Christ in the world, when his head should be laid among the clods." (p. 17.)

The last five pages of the sermon are so entirely occupied with Gurnall's character, that I think it best to give them unabridged:

"I infer from hence, in the last place, how signal your obligations are to Almighty God for the long enjoyment of that exemplary pattern of all true piety and virtue (your deceased Minister, I mean), whom (for your sins, I fear) He hath lately taken from you. Show now your obedience to God, your respects to him, your kindness and charity to your own souls, by a zealous and faithful care to transcribe impartially in your own lives whatever was truly imitable in your Minister's. And not to carry you beyond the confines of the text, let me earnestly bespeak your Christian compliance with a double duty here enjoined.

"I. To follow his faith.

"II. To imitate his exemplary conversation."

"I. Follow his faith, and that in a double respect,

in the soundness of his faith, and in the steadfastness of his faith.

“1. Follow him in the soundness of his faith. The faith which he perseveringly professed, and taught, was that doctrine which is according to godliness; that faith which owns God for its immediate Author and the Scripture for its infallible rule, the faith that was once delivered to the saints, which is not the result of fancy and imagination, but the product of an eternal counsel, which was confirmed by the miracles and sealed with the blood of a Saviour. In a word, that faith which he so zealously taught had sure footing in the Holy Scriptures. Whenever he propounded any truth which required not only the assent of your understandings, but also the obedience and adoration of your faith, he constantly showed you the Canon of the Scriptures for its confirmation. *If any then (which God forbid) should appear after him in this place, and attempt the proselyting of you to another Gospel, or to any new doctrine of faith foreign to the Scriptures, should he pretend to the authority of a commissioned angel from heaven, let him be held accursed.*

“Follow him in the steadfastness of his faith. The same rule of faith which he laid before you at his first coming amongst you, he lived and preached by till the day of his death. And this I take the greater liberty to assert, because some persons have not blushed to tell the world publicly that since his conformity to

the discipline of the Church he had apostatized and revolted from that faith which he had formerly professed and taught. But be ye all assured, that, as to the great fundamentals of faith and religion, he was ever the same, and what he taught you to his last breath, I doubt not but he stood ready to confirm and seal with his blood, even in the fiercest flames of martyrdom, if God had called him to that fiery trial.

“II. Imitate his Christian conversation. My meaning is, exemplify those Evangelical graces and Christian virtues in your lives, which did so oriently shine forth in his. To propound a few:—

“1. His eminent humility. This was the garment which covered all his excellent accomplishments, although indeed their beauty was rendered more conspicuous and amiable by casting this veil over it. O what mean thoughts had he of himself! and was not only content, but desirous also, that others should have so too: no man ever expressed so low a value of his worth and merits as himself did. Everything in others that was good he admired as excellent, whilst the same or better in himself he thought not unworthily contemned: his eyes were full of his own deficiencies and others’ perfections.

“In a word, he was a lovely valley, sweetly planted, well watered, richly fruitful: imitate him then herein, and by a holy emulation study to excel him in this

adorning grace; and for your help herein recollect what you heard from him in his elaborate discourses among you upon Phil. ii. 5: 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,'—this humble mind.

"2. His extensive love. This grace did variously exert itself.

"(1) His love to God. He loved Him exceedingly whom he could not love excessively, having such high and raised apprehensions of his Maker's excellencies, as caused him to judge his prime and best affections unworthy to be placed on so divine an object.

"(2) His love to the holy Jesus. This was such a seraphic and divine fire in his soul, as did marvellously consume his love to the world and all sublunary comforts. You are witnesses, and all that knew him, in how eminent a measure and degree the world was crucified unto him, and he unto the world by the cross of Christ.

"(3) His love to souls. This was it, no doubt that made him so indefatigable both in his study and in the pulpit; from hence it was, that the throne of grace, his study, the pulpit, and his sick neighbours, had the whole of his time divided amongst them, and devoted to them.

"(4) HIS UNBOUNDED LOVE TO ALL CHRISTIANS; though they differed in their sentiments from him. He loved Christians for their Christianity, and did adore the image of his Saviour wherein he saw it in

any of his members *unhappily persecuting one another with hard names* and characters of reproach. How often did he PUBLICLY DEPLORE AND BEWAIL, that the greatest measure of love that is found at this day amongst the professors of the cross, was not true Christian love, *but only love of a party!* Follow him then in the impartial exercise of this grace, and for your help therein remember what he taught you from Eph. v. 2, ‘And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us;’ and as you have any regard for the Author of your profession, take heed that a spirit of division (now) crowd not in among you. Your unity is your strength as well as your beauty; persist therefore, I beseech you, in that Christian order amongst yourselves in which it was his great ambition all his days to preserve and keep you. Timely oppose the crafty design of the subtle adversary of souls, who will take this occasion (if possible), now the spiritual parent is out of the way, to set the children together by the ears.

“3. His diffusive charity. His alms were as exuberant as his love: misery and want, wherever he met them, did sufficiently endear their objects to him. He was none of those that hide their faces from the poor, nor of the number of them who satisfy their consciences with a single exercise of their charity once a year, but daily were the emanations of his bounty. Yet although he cast the seeds of his charity

upon all sorts of ground, he sowed them thickest upon God's inclosure: my meaning is, he did good unto all, 'but especially to those that were of the household of faith.' Make him herein, and his example, the pattern of your daily imitation; for the world, which is chained together by intermingled love, will soon shatter and fall in pieces if charity shall once fail and die: and for your better help herein, call over those potent arguments for the exercise of this evangelical duty, which he urged upon you, from that apostolical injunction, Heb. xiii. 16, 'But to do good, and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.'

"4. His persevering diligence and faithfulness in his place and station. You could not but observe that his whole disposal of himself was to perpetual industry and service. He not only avoided idleness, but seemed to have a forcible antipathy against it, and was often recommending it to you with great concern and vigour in his public advices, to be always furnished with somewhat to do; *ut te inveniat semper diabolus occupatum*: that the devil may never find thee at leisure to listen to his temptations, as St. Hierom adviseth. The idle man's brain being, in truth, not only the devil's shop, but his kingdom too, a model of and an appendage unto hell; a place (like that) given up to torture and mischief. As to himself, his chiefest recreation was variety of work; for beside

those portions of time which the necessities of nature and of civil life extorted from him, there was not a minute of the day which he left vacant. Now to stimulate your zeal to a pious imitation of him herein also, let me admonish you to ruminate upon those accurate sermons you heard from him upon Matt. xx. 6 : ‘Why stand ye here all the day idle?’

“5. His tender sympathy with the afflicted Church of Christ. Like a true son of Zion he could not rejoice when his mother mourned, he daily felt as much by sympathy as he did by sense; and no wonder, for he that hath a stock going in the Church’s ship, cannot but lament and quake at every storm. O how frequent were his inquiries after her, how fervent were his prayers for her, how bowelly and compassionate were his mournings over her! The deplorable condition of the Church and nation lay exceeding near his heart both living and dying; he preferring their happiness and welfare above his chief joy. Now in order to your attaining the same Christ-like temper with him, frequently meditate on what you heard from him upon Neh. i. 4, where the sympathizing prophet refuseth to drink wine, when the afflicted Church drank water.

“6. And lastly, to sum up all, imitate him in his daily care and endeavour to live religion in all his capacities. As a Minister, ye are witnesses, and God also, how faithfully, how conscientiously he discharged

his duty towards you. In the exercise of his ministerial function, if censure itself be able to tax him for any neglect, it must be in not more frequent visiting his flock, from which nothing but a weak body kept him, not a proud or unwilling mind. The obstruction he met with in this part of his duty, from his tender habit of body (which would not suffer him so frequently to perform it as he desired), was his great sorrow both living and dying; yet having this to comfort him, that the frailty of his body was his affliction but not his sin. Consider him in his next relative capacity, as a child, how dutiful and obsequious! O how great was that tribute of veneration and respect which he so constantly paid to the hoary hairs of his aged parents! As a husband, how tender and compassionate; as a parent, how indulgent and affectionate; as a minister, how kind and munificent! Thus was he universally good in all stations, and lived religion in every capacity. And if you desire to imitate him herein also, as becomes you, dress your souls by that glass daily, which his dying hand last held up before your eyes: I mean by heavenly meditation, make those useful truths your own, which you last heard from him upon Tit. ii. 12, 'That, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' Which Christian lesson, if it shall be as practically learned by you, as it was faithfully

taught by him, I will be bold to say thus much in the singular commendation of you his people, that you will thereby give the world a convictive instance that this age hath virtues as stupendous as its vices!

“THE CONCLUSION.—Thus I have given myself the satisfaction of doing my duty in propounding your Minister’s example to your Christian view. Let none censoriously say I have been all this while painting the prophet’s sepulchre. No, but describing the prophet himself, and with this single and sincere intention, that you may timely know you have had a prophet of the Lord among you; a person that had *omnia in se sempiterna præter corpusculum*: all things living and lasting to eternity except his body, which was the only thing he had subject to mortality, and besides which nothing of him doth see corruption. It will be below the merit of his person, as well as the greatness of our loss, to celebrate his death in womanish complaints, or indeed by any verbal lamentations; nor can anything beseem his memory but what is sacred and divine, as his writings are. May his just fame from them, and from his virtues, be precious to all succeeding ages. And when elegies committed to the trust of marble shall be as illegible as if they had been writ in water, when all stately pyramids shall be dissolved in dust, and all the venerable monuments of antiquity be devoured by the corroding teeth of time, then let this short charac-

ter, describing him in his best and fullest portraiture, remain of him: viz., that he was a CHRISTIAN IN COMPLETE ARMOUR."

Circumstances at Lavenham, we can easily see, are referred to in this funeral sermon, of which we know nothing certain now. It is evident that Gurnall's troubles during the latter part of his incumbency were neither few nor small. His conformity in 1662 was probably never forgotten; and the last years of his life were probably darkened by the implacable enmity of some of his parishioners. That Burkitt, who doubtless knew more of Gurnall's inner life than any one, should have given the world no biography of him, is much to be regretted. He could have done it well, and it is a pity that he did not do it.

Gurnall's widow survived her husband nineteen years, and seems to have resided at Lavenham. At any rate she was buried at Lavenham on September 7, 1698, and the grant of administration to her property called her "Sarah Gurnall, widow, of Lavenham, deceased."

Gurnall left at least eight children, according to M'Keon, two having died young.—

1. Sarah, baptized April 2, 1646, married to Mr. Mayor, of Newcastle-on-Tyne.

2. Susannah, baptized April 4, 1650, married the Rev. Samuel Beachcroft, of Emanuel College, Cambridge, Rector of Semer, Suffolk.

3. Catherine, the date of whose baptism we do not know, married the Rev. Bezaleel Peachie, of Emanuel College, Cambridge, Vicar of Bures St. Mary, near Sudbury, who was one of the witnesses of Gurnall's will.

4. Elizabeth, baptized April 25, 1655, married the Rev. Philip Richardson, of Christ's College, Cambridge, a clergyman of Ipswich.

5. Ann, baptized February 11, 1655, continued to live with her mother at Lavenham until her decease in 1698, and married in June, 1700, Mr. William Manthorp, of Lowestoft.

6. Another sister, whose name is not known, married a Mr. Shaftoe, of Newcastle-on-Tyne.

7. Thomas, baptized March 13, 1659, settled at Little Waldringfield, and was buried there in 1723.

8. Joseph, baptized July 23, 1662, was an attorney, and according to M'Keon's belief, resided at Lavenham.

9. John, baptized December 24, 1664, was sent to Christ's College, proceeded B.A. in 1685, and afterwards became Curate of Brockley, until 1698. He was buried at Lavenham on February 6, 1700.

10. Leonard, baptized May 11, 1669, is one of whom nothing is known.

I can find no trace of Gurnall's descendants in the present day. There is no one, so far as I can learn, of his name at Lavenham. The Rectory House in which he lived is no longer standing. The living of Lavenham has passed into the hands of Caius College, Cambridge. Everything connected with the good man, except his book, seems to have passed away. By it alone, "he being dead yet speaketh."

I have now completely exhausted all the information I can supply about the author of "*The Christian in Complete Armour*," and can only express my deep

regret that I can tell the reader nothing more. It certainly does seem rather tantalizing that a writer of the seventeenth century,—who is better known by name than almost any of the Puritans—who lived within twenty miles of such men as Owen, Marshall, Newcomen, Young, and Stockton,—who resided for thirty-five years in a town, of some little importance two hundred years ago, in a county so well known at that time as Suffolk—that such a man should have passed away and so very little be known about him! But so it is. Gurnall's case, perhaps, does not stand alone. Perhaps the last day will prove that some of the best and holiest men that ever lived are hardly known.

Nothing now remains for me to do except to say a few words about Gurnall's literary works, which have been lately, for the first time, brought together in a complete form.^a

The first of Gurnall's works, and indeed the one by which he is commonly known, is his famous book, "The Christian in Complete Armour." This well-known book consists, like many of the theological writings of the seventeenth century, of sermons or lectures delivered by the author in the course of his regular ministry, in a consecutive course, on Eph. vi. 10—20.

^a I refer to Blackie's complete edition of Gurnall's works, which I take the opportunity of strongly recommending to all buyers of theology.

It was originally published in three small quarto volumes, and in three portions, at three different times. The first volume, containing Eph. vi. 10—13, was published in 1655. This volume is dedicated to "the Inhabitants of Lavenham, my dearly beloved friends and neighbours;" and the dedication contains a distinct statement, that the book consists of sermons preached at Lavenham. "What I present you," says Gurnall, "within this treatise, is a dish from your own table, and so (I hope) will go down the better. You cannot despise it, though the fare be mean, except you will blame yourselves who chose the cook." There is a date at the end of the dedication which happily serves to show when the work was published. It is dated January 1, 1655. My copy is the second edition.

The second volume of the course, containing Eph. vi. 14—16, was published in 1658. It contains a dedication to "Thomas Darcy, Esq., and Mrs. Sisilia Darcy, his religious consort," at Kentwell Hall in Suffolk; from which it appears that Mrs. Darcy was daughter of Sir Symond D'Ewes, Gurnall's patron. The dedication is dated Lavenham, October, 1657. My copy is the first edition.

The third volume of the work, containing Eph. vi. 17—20, was published in 1662. It is dedicated to Lady Mary Vere, Baroness of Tilbury; a lady well known in the seventeenth century, and daughter of

William Tracey, Esq., of Toddington in Gloucestershire. The dedication is dated August 28, 1661. My copy is the first edition.

Comment, or recommendation, is perhaps needless in speaking of Gurnall's great work. The fact that a sixth edition was published in the year the author died, 1679, is enough to show that its merits were early recognized. The high reputation it has always borne among lovers of sound English divinity down to the present day, is another fact which ought not to be forgotten. Other theological works of the seventeenth century were famous in their day, but are now seldom read. "The Christian in Complete Armour" is a work that is read and enjoyed by thousands up to this time.

One grand peculiarity of "The Christian in Complete Armour" is the soundness and Scriptural proportion of its doctrinal statements. There is nothing extravagant and overstretched in Gurnall's exhibition of any point, either in faith or practice. Nothing is glaringly overcoloured, nothing is completely thrown into the shade. In this respect it is eminently like Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," a work so beautifully proportioned in doctrine, that Calvinists and Arminians, Churchmen and Dissenters, are all alike agreed in admiring it.

Another striking peculiarity of Gurnall's book is its profusion of illustrations and comparisons. You can hardly open a page of the work without meeting with

some vivid image or picture of Divine things, which lights up the whole subject under consideration like a sunbeam. I am not prepared to say that in this respect Gurnall surpasses Brooks, Watson, or Swinnoek, but I am quite sure that he deserves to be classed with them. Happy would it be for the Church if this gift of illustration was more common and more cultivated by preachers! The man whose sermons are best remembered is the man who, like his Divine Master, "uses similitudes." "He is the eloquent man," says an oriental proverb, "who turns his hearers' ears into eyes, and makes them see what he speaks of."

One more beautiful feature in Gurnall's book is its richness in pithy, pointed, and epigrammatical sayings. Page after page might be filled, if a collection was made of all the short, golden sentences which are to be found in "*The Christian in Complete Armour*." You will often find in a line and a half some great truth, put so concisely, and yet so fully, that you really marvel how so much thought could be got into so few words.

It would be easy to heap up testimonies to the value of Gurnall's "*Christian in Complete Armour*." Baxter and Flavel both thought most highly of the book. Toplady used to make copious extracts from it in his common-place book. John Newton said that if he was confined to one book beside the Bible, he dared say Gurnall's "*Christian Armour*" would be his choice.

Cecil spent many of the last days of his life in reading it, and repeatedly expressed his admiration of it. But I have said enough already to weary the reader, and the best advice I can give him is to read the book for himself in the beautiful edition in which it has lately been brought out by Messrs. Blackie, and to judge for himself.

Two other books, and two only, are known to have been published by Gurnall, in addition to his great work, "The Christian in Complete Armour." Both of these are single sermons preached on special occasions.

One of these sermons is called "The Magistrate's Portraiture drawn from the Word." It was preached at Stowmarket, in Suffolk, upon August 20, 1656, "before the election of Parliament recurs for the same county," and published the same year. The subject of the sermon is Isaiah i. 26. It is an excellent sermon, and worthy of the author in every way.

The other sermon is called "The Christian's Labour and Reward." It was preached at Castle Hedingham, in Essex, on January 10, 1671, and published in 1672. It consists chiefly of a discourse preached at the funeral of Lady Mary Vere, widow of Sir Horace Vere of Tilbury; the lady to whom the third volume of "The Christian in Complete Armour" is dedicated. It contains a dedication to Elizabeth, Countess Dowager of Clare, who was Lady Mary Vere's daughter. It is a good sermon undoubtedly, but would have been bet-

ter if it had been more compressed. However, the preachers of funeral sermons are seldom allowed much time for their preparation, and perhaps Gurnall, had no time to make his sermon shorter.

I have seen it asserted that Gurnall, in addition to the works already mentioned, published a volume of sermons in 1660. M'Keon says that this volume is mentioned in Cooke's "*Preacher's Assistant*," published in 1783, and that a bookseller in London told him that he had himself seen a copy.

In reply to this I can only say that no such volume of sermons is to be found in the British Museum, nor in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, nor in the Redcross-street Library in London. Neither can I hear of any living man, whether bookseller or collector of old divinity, who ever saw the volume. I must therefore be allowed to think that M'Keon made a mistake, and that no such volume was ever published.

I now conclude this lengthy biography by expressing my earnest hope that Gurnall's works may yet find many readers as well as purchasers. It is indeed to be desired that solid scriptural theology, like that contained in "*The Christian in Complete Armour*," should be valued and studied in the Church. Books in which Scripture is reverently regarded as the only rule of faith and practice,—books in which Christ and the Holy Ghost have their rightful office,—books in which justification, and sanctification, and regenera-

tion, and faith, and grace, and holiness are clearly, distinctly, and accurately delineated and exhibited, these are the only books which do real good. Few things need reviving more than a taste for such books as these among readers.

For my own part, I can only say that I read everything I can get hold of which professes to throw light on my Master's business, and the work of Christ among men. But the more I read, the less I admire modern theology. The more I study the productions of the new schools of theological teachers, the more I marvel that men and women can be satisfied with such writing. There is a vagueness, a mistiness, a shallowness, an indistinctness, a superficiality, an aimlessness, a hollowness about the literature of the Catholic or broader systems, as they are called, which, to my mind, stamps their origin on their face. They are of the earth, earthy. I find more of definite soul-satisfying thought in one page of Gurnall than in five pages of such books as the leaders of the so-called Catholic and "Broad Church Schools" put forth. In matters of theology "the old is better."

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